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OR,

A Neat Piece of Work.

BY J. C. COWDRICK,
AUTHOR OF "THE DETECTIVE'S APPRENTICE,"
"CIBUTA JOHN," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"SANDY" SAM SANDERS.

"Now you kin just jump right up an' chaw my nose off, and churu me inter sour butter-milk, if I ain't a-goin over to New York! I've got jest two dollars an' forty-nine cents, actual count, an' I'll paint th' hull town from Battery Park to Harlem Bridge! You hear me!"

The speaker was a boy—a lad about fifteen years of age, and as dirty and ragged a specimen of the genus "street-Arab" as one could wish to see.

"I KNOWS THAT CABBY," THE STREET SCOUT MUTTERED, "I KNOWS HIM LIKE WAX KNOWS A SHOEMAKER, AN' HE AIN'T ANY TOO GOOD, NEITHER."

He was a stout, broad-shouldered little fellow, with black hair and eyes, and, when his face was clean enough to admit of close inspection, which was seldom, was pronounced passably good-looking.

His name was Sam Sanders; but he was better known as "Sandy" Sam—a sobriquet that had been given him by his boy companions.

And the name fitted him well.

Not only was it a play upon his real name, but it expressed his leading, or predominant, characteristic; for, according to the slang of the day, Sam was a "sandy" boy.

He was as full of "sand" as an egg is full of nutriment; and "sand," in the language of the street is a synonym for courage.

Sandy Sam was a brave boy; and not only was he brave, but he was as full of fight as a Spartan.

And, too, Sam was a Jerseyman; and New Jersey is sometimes called the "Land of Sand," although only the southern counties of the noble little State can lay claim to that distinction.

He was a Jersey City boy—and he was proud of it.

As we introduce him he was standing with his back braced against one of the posts which dotted the curb of the paved semicircle opening out from the ferry, his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his trousers, one foot crossed gracefully over the other, his bootblack box slung over his shoulder, his dilapidated cap set well back upon his head, and the stump of a cigar in his mouth.

Several newsboys and bootblacks were standing around, all of whom looked upon him with admiring eyes, for Sandy was their chief scout and guide, who had planned and executed many a practical joke for their amusement, and had led them to victory through many a furious battle with boys in other quarters of the city or with Arabs from over the river.

"Goin' over to New York, be ye?" queried one of the gamins' companions. "Can't ye take a fellow along with ye?"

"Nixey Josephus! You fellers ain't world-wise enough to go out of Jersey yet."

"Oh! you come off, Sandy!"

"That's all right, Sam!"

"It's a fact, jest as I tell ye; an' I'm noted for tellin' th' truth, as you know; the chief o' the street scouts never, never tells a lie!"

"Oh! of course!"

"Jest so! Besides, there's a new law passed that no Jerseyman shall leave th' State 'thout permission; an' that permission is somethin' you hain't got. So, jest take th' sound an' solid advice of your pherlosfer, guide an' friend, an' remain on your native soil till ye are able ter whollop twice your weight in dog, cat or man."

"I was down ter Trenton—"

"In prison, I s'pose."

"You shet up." I was goin' ter say that I was down ter Trenton yesterday, ter see th' Governor an' git permission—see how pat I've got that word?—'permission' ter travel abroad; an' so I'm all hunk."

"You down ter Trenton ter see th' Governor! Oh! Give us a rest!"

"Yes me down ter Trenton! Did ye ever know me ter tell a lie when th' truth would do jest as well? Of course you didn't!"

"Well, Sandy, what did he say ter ye?"

"What did he say ter me? What d'ye s'pose he said? I tripped right inter his noble presence, an' sez 'Hallo! Guv., how be ye?'"

"Hully-oh! Sam, how is things? sez he. An he jumped up an' shook hands with me, an' then asked me to sit down an' have a smoke."

"Oh! what a whopper! There is no George Washington-an'-his-little-hatchet style about you!"

"You jest bet yer life there ain't, sonny, an' ye'll win every time! Why, I'm a hero 'long-side of th' riginal George! He never told a lie, because he dassn't; he'd been wallopped sick, ef he had, so he had to tell the truth; but that ain't my case at all. I can lie, if I want ter, an' lie like an everlastin' Mormon too; but I won't do it. I've got th' moral backbone an' sand to deny myself that onmannerly pleasure."

"Yes, like fun ye have! What was ye jest a-givin' us about yer trip down ter Trenton?"

"What was I a-givin' ye? Why, th' real old-fashioned article—th' mantle right off th' shoulders of grim fact, of course. Don't doubt my word, do ye?"

"No, we don't doubt it; oh, no! We believe that the bantam rooster tuk dinner with the giraffe."

"Use if ye do, we'll go right down ter Trenton and prove it; that is ter say, we'll pay all expenses, an' so forth, we will."

"Oh! We'll take yer word fer it this time, Sam! No need ter go to any trouble."

"That's where ye show yer good sense. It's best ter make believe ye take stock in what a feller sez, sometimes. It saves trouble an' explanation."

"Specially if t'other feller is the biggest, hey?"

"Yes, specially so then."

"Well, if you're goin' over ter New York ter do some paintin' why don't ye go?"

"Why don't I go? Well, how in old everlastin' kin I go, if you fellers keep me here a-chinnin' to me all night? You boys do jest beat all fer axin' questions. I never see'd sich a set of fellers fer wantin' ter know everything. Why don't I go? Well, I am a-goin'. Jest keep yer north eyes open, now, an' ye'll see the gleam an' flash of my coat-tails as I dodge atween this here team of hosses a-comin', an' work through th' gate 'thout payin' any toll. So-long, boys! Ta-ta! If I don't come back all safe an' sound, jest drop me a postal-card an' ax me where the street scout is, an' what he's up to."

"Who's a-doin' all th' chinnin' now?" queried one of the gamins.

"Now there goes another question! Great tar-heel chewin' terbakker! I should think yer jaws would ache, a-talkin' so much. You beat all th' Dutch in Hoboken. 'Who's a-doin' all th' chinnin' now?' Jest as if I was a-sayin' anything! Ye really make me tired, you fellers do. Ye have yer fly-traps open so much I should think th' admustfere would warp yer teeth. I don't see how ye manage ter eat an' do all th' talkin' you do! Why, ye're almost enough ter talk th' legs off an iron pot! Gosh! I can't git a word in edgeways when your mills git a-runnin'! There! now I've missed that team! I do wish you fellers would hold yer jaws long enough ter give me a chance ter think. Ye do nothin' but chin, chin, chin, an' ax questions. But ye kin twist my ears till I whistle like a mockin'-bird an' howl like a Hungry-arian spitz poodle with a splint on his tail, if I ain't goin' over to New York, N. Y., allee same! This here two dollars an' forty-nine cents is jest a-burnin' holes inter my pocket, an' I've got ter spend it an' see some fun! Guess I'll treat myself to a pint o' peanuts and then take a nigger-heaven seat in some first-class theater an' witness a real Mary Anderson play. 'Freckled Faced Sal, th' Scout's Bride; or, Tooth an' Toe-nail to the Bitter End,' or something o' that kind. Wouldn't ye jest like ter come along? I bet ye would! But ye can't, for reasons aforesaid, ter wit: Ye ain't got th' proper docyments—the passports, ye know—from th' Guv. Ah! Do me eyes deceive me? No, I guess they don't. I think I see a pair o' dashin' steeds approachin', an' here's my chance. Now, don't say a word louder'n thunder, an' fer goodness' sake don't ax no more questions. Ah! yes, it is! A team o' full-blood nags—Maud S. an' J. I. C., I guess. Whew! See 'em come! An' a mighty fine kerrege, too! Now, jest hold yer heads shut, an' I'll be off. Good-by, feller-townsmen; think of me an' write often, if not oftener. Ta-ta!" And Sam turned away, when another of the group asked:

"Ye ain't goin' ter take yer box along, be ye?"

"Well, by th' great jumpin' turtle o' th' Newark preairies!" and as he uttered the exclamation Sam unsling his box from his shoulder and sat down upon it.

"What's matter now, Sam?"

"What's th' matter? Sure enough, what is th' matter? Didn't I make a special request for ye to ax no more questions? An' didn't ye up an' ax one afore I'd hardly got my mouth shut? Heavens! How ye kin stand it, ter keep yer jaws a-waggin' an' a-waggin', an' yer tongues a-floppin' an' a floppin', all the time, I can't see! I should think ye'd die with lock-jaw—or loose-jaw, conjunction on th' brain, or some other fatal melody. Be I a-goin' ter take my box along? In course I am! D'ye s'pose I'm goin' fer pleasure alone? Not much! I expect ter put a Jersey polish on th' hoofs o' several Manhattan Dutchmen, an' bring several Empire dimes across the noble Hudson when I return. Be good boys while I'm gone, an' if any Ital-yun imps come around here, jest wade right in to 'em an' give 'em Hail Columbia. Here's th' cab, my brave pards, an' so—oo-reuoor!" And kissing the tips of his fingers to his laughing companions, the Street Scout chief hastened away, his box once more slung over his shoulder.

A cab was just drawing up to the ferry entrance, and seeing that it was empty, Sam watched his chance and popped in, dropping upon the floor at once to escape the watchful eyes of the toll-taker.

The cabman paid his fare, and then drove on, all unconscious that he had a passenger within his vehicle.

The Scout kept well out of sight until the cab was some distance past the gates; then he arose, waved his hand to his companions, who were looking intently after him, and then threw himself back upon the seat, crossed his legs, and puffed away at his cigar-butt most contentedly, while the cab rolled on and went upon the Des-brosses street boat.

"Great circus-hoss!" Sam half exclaimed. "This here is jest boss! I wonder I never thought o' this afore! I feel jest like a millionaire—or at least I s'pose I do, fer I don't care a tinker's sneeze whether school keeps or not! I'll jest lay back here an' dream I'm rich, though I s'pose there'll be a gallus awakenin', by an' by."

CHAPTER II.

THE SCOUT FINDS A "PARD."

WHEN the boat reached the New York side, and the cab drove off, Sam still retained his seat.

"Might as well git all I kin out of it," he thought, "so long as it's free gratis fer nothin'." And half aloud he muttered:

"Lordy! I wonder if I'll git a chromo, when his nibs finds out he's got a passenger? Th' chances is I will, unless I'm spy enough ter git out o' th' way when he raises his hoof in my direction. Great ginger! Won't he be howlin' mad, though! He'll want ter chaw me all up. There's no use borrowin' trouble, though. 'Enjoy th' present moment an' let th' future take care o' itself,' is my motto. Neverthless, it won't be a bad idee ter have my eyes peeled fer trouble when it 'gins ter rise above th' horizon."

The cab rattled rapidly along, up one street and down another, and at last stopped before a fine-looking house on one of the fashionable avenues.

The driver did not get down from his seat, but the moment he stopped he gave three short and sharp whistles.

"Wonder what that means?" thought Sam. "It 'pears like a signal o' some sort. Guess it's time fer me to be gettin' out. Don't seem ter be any chance ter go any further, fer I guess some one else wants ter use th' cab 'sides me."

Silently the boy opened the door, and then sprung out.

"Hullo!" cried the cabman, "where did you come from?"

"Oh! I kem jest across from Jersey," the gamin answered, in a careless tone.

"Th' blazes you did! An' did ye ride over in this cab?"

"Sure's ye live! I'm one of the kindest-hearted boys ye ever heard tell of! When I see ye a-comin' along with no one inside, I felt sorry fer ye; an' thinkin' ye'd be sorter lonesome, I piled in an' kem along."

"Well, you don't lack fer cheek, I'll be blamed if you do! I've half a notion to give you a good whaling."

"That's jest th' way with you sort of fellers. Ye don't know how ter take an act o' well-meant kindness. As fer whalin' me—I ain't much 'traid o' that!"

"The deuce you ain't!"

"Nixey! Not a bit! I'm here, an' you're there; an' I kalkerlate I kin keep jest th' same space o' distance atween us, an' not exert myself much, either. D'ye savvy? D'ye catch on ter th' leadin' thread o' th' narrative? Ef ye do, jest grip fast ter it, an' don't let it git away. Idees is hard things ter ketch—at least some folks find 'em so. See?"

"I see you, you sassy young imp; an' if I had time, I'd give you the worst thrashin' you ever had! Come! Be off with you, now!"

"Yes," I'm a-goin'," said Sam. "Can't ye see me move?"

"I'll make ye move, if I get down there!"

"No! Will ye, though? Say! If I was a poor, miserable cabby like you be, d'ye know what I'd do?"

"Be off, I say!"

"Well, I'll tell ye. I'd turn my boss over to th' S. P. C. A., an' then borror a wheelbarrow an' go ter peddlin' clams. You've got jist th' finest voice an' th' best-shaped mouth fer hollerin' 'cla-a-a-ms!' that I ever kem across. I tell ye what it is, you'd— Oh! don't git excited! I'm goin'! Ta-ta! Take another ride with ye some day!" And as the cabman sprung down from his seat, Sam hastily retreated.

The cabman felt inclined to give chase, but at that moment the door of the house opened, and three men came out, one of whom was apparently ill, as the other two had to support him—one upon each side.

Sam paused and looked back.

"I knows that cabby," the Street Scout muttered, "I knows him like wax knows a shoe-maker, an' he ain't any too good, neither. He's a Jersey City hack, he is; an' I wonder what brings him over here? No good, I'll bet on that. Wonder who th' three guys are? One of 'em seems ter be a little off his feed, kinder out o' sorts, ez it wur; an' I s'pose they're goin' ter take him home—or somethin' like that. But, I guess it's no funeral o' mine, an' so I'd better slope off an' tend ter my own affairs, if I kin find any ter attend to."

The sick man was helped into the cab, the other quickly followed, and then the cabman sprung up to his seat and drove rapidly away.

"There," said the Scout, "th' play is over an' th' curtain is drapped, an' now I'll hie me henceward in search of new amusement. I wonder what brought me over here, anyhow? I s'pose it was th' cab I got inter, principally; but I'm gosh blamed to tater-bugs if I know why I kem over here. Bein' as I am here, however, I'll try an' make th' most of it, an' enjoy myself. Let's see. Guess I'll strike out fer some show, an' witness a blood-curdlin' drama."

And, acting upon the thought at once, the gamin struck out accordingly.

He had not gone far, however, when he came upon a scene that caused the blood to quicken in his veins.

It was a street fight.

Sam ran at once to the spot, and then his blood fairly boiled at what he beheld.

Three boys, all about his own size, were beating one boy who was considerably smaller than they, most unmercifully.

The little fellow was doing his best, and making a good fight; but the odds against him were too great, and he was getting the worst of it, sadly.

The Street Scout dropped his box and sprung to the rescue at once.

"Jest hold on there, you great big cowards, an' tackle some one nearer yer size!" he cried. "Ain't ye 'shamed o' yerselves, three of ye ter pound a boy not more than half yer size?" And as he sprung into the midst of the fight he dealt two of the boys such stinging blows that they made way before him at once.

"Come, little feller," he added, as he picked the small boy up, "jest prop yerself up on yer pins, an' if we can't win this fight it'll be 'cause we ain't got no nerve. I don't pretend ter know whether you're in th' right, nor in th' wrong; but as it's three ter one against ye, I'm on *your* side every time!"

"Look 'e here, you feller," cried one of the three larger boys, "who be you?"

"Who be me?" retorted Sam. "I'll tell ye who I am, an' in short meter, too. I'm 'Sandy' Sam, th' solid boy from th' Land o' Sand. Jest paste that inter yer hat, an' think seriously over it. I'm a terror from Jersey. I am, an' don't ye fergit it!"

"Well, what d'ye mean by comin' here an' pokin' yer nose in where ye've got no business?"

"That's jest where ye make yer mistook! I've got business here! It's *any* feller's business ter chip in when he sees three 'gainst one in a fight, an' I'm jest th' game rooster to chip in, every time. Say! what's th' row about anyhow?"

"Well, this here feller he come up here with his blackin'-kit, an' he's got no biz here. This neighborhood 'longs ter our gang, an' we don't 'low no strangers ter tote a box 'round here. That's what's th' matter."

"I wasn't doin' anything," said the small boy. "I was jest walkin' up th' avenue, when they pitched inter me."

"So," said the New Jersey boy, "ye don't 'low no strange boy ter tote his box 'round here, eh? Ye mean me too, perhaps. I've got *my* box 'long, as ye see. What are ye a-goin' ter do 'bout that?"

The three boys had now joined one another, and were preparing for another fight.

"We'll show ye what we're goin' ter do about it! We'll send ye back ter Jersey th' wu'st-lookin' specimen ever was seen. No street scrub from Jersey kin come over *here* an' flop his wings an' crow, an' don't ye fergit it. You've poked yer nose inter this affair, an' now ye've got ter fight it out."

"Well, sail right in then. I'm a fighter, I am; a fighter from Fighterville. I come from a fightin' family. My mother is Irish an' my father is Dutch, an' I represent th' pure b'iled-down essence of th' fightin' perpenserties o' both sides. Lordy! Ye'd orter see *them* on th' war-path once, you'd hesitate 'bout goin' fer me, now I tell ye, an' if ye don't believe me, wade in an' find out!"

"That's jest what we're a-goin' ter do, so watch out!" and the three advanced.

Sandy Sam squared himself for action, and the trouble began.

"Say, little feller," he shouted, "you needn't pitch in unless they git me down, an' then jest grab hold o' their heels or hair an' drag 'em off."

"All right!" was the reply; "I'll see they don't git ye foul. Give it to 'em, right an' left, Sammy!"

The first round was short and quick.

The three boys advanced at once, and all made a spring for the boy from New Jersey at the same time. He dodged down, struck out with his right hand and sent the middle boy sprawling upon his back, gave another a side cuff with his left hand that made him see stars, and then grappled with the third and stood him upon his head in almost no time at all.

But that did not end the fight by any means.

The two first were now up again, and before the Jersey Scout could turn they were upon him.

He struggled bravely, and gave them some heavy blows, but they succeeded in getting him down.

Then the third one came and lent his assistance.

But the boy from over the river was not down for long.

The little fellow in whose behalf he was fighting sprung to the rescue, pulled two of their enemies off, and before they could get back again Sam had turned the other one and was once more upon his feet.

"That's th' way ter do it, little feller," he cried. "Long as they don't get me down and bump my head on th' pavement, I'm all right. You jest keep yer eyes open, an' give me a lift when I need it most."

"Come on, you fellers, an' let me finish windin' up yer main-springs! I'm gettin' warmed to my work now, an' I'm ready fer ye in any form, shape, or manner! *Come!* Don't hang back, or I'll think ye're afraid! Let me give you a little concentrated Jersey lightnin', jest ter show ye how we do it at home! Ain't ye comin'? Well, then I'll have ter go fer ye!" And suiting action to the word, Sam sprung forward and struck one of the boys a blow on the nose.

That blow set the fight going once more.

Wild with rage and smarting with pain, the three "went for" Sam in deadly earnest.

For a few minutes it was hard to distinguish one boy from the others.

Sandy Sam was full of true grit, but he had more this time than he could handle, and ere long the three had him down again.

But his little chum was not idle. He sprung again to the rescue, and, after a severe struggle, managed to pull one assailant away; but that boy instantly turned upon him, and the Jerseyman was left to fight it out with the other two as best he could.

Hot and furious was the battle, and those who looked on certainly expected to see the three bullies win; but it was not to be so.

Sandy Sam at last found an opportunity he had been watching for, and with a quick movement he cracked the heads of his two antagonists together, knocking one of them senseless, and making the other so "silly" that he hardly knew what had happened.

Then Sam sprung to the assistance of his *protege*, but the third boy took to his heels and ran.

"Bully fer us!" Sam cried. "Give us yer hand, little chum. You're th' true stuff, an' no mistake!"

CHAPTER III.

WOULD-BE DETECTIVES.

SANDY SAM and his new chum shook hands warmly, and Sam asked:

"What's yer name, little feller? What title d'ye sail under an' go ter bed with?"

"Well, my real name is Tommy Twister, but I'm 'most always called 'Little Chick,' and sometimes 'Little Chick the detective.'"

"You a detective—a little feller like *you*?" cried Sam. "Oh! what are ye a-tryin' to give me? Why, you ain't much bigger'n a pint o' peanuts!"

The two were now walking down the avenue, having made their way out of the crowd that had collected at the scene of the fight, where a policeman had just put in an appearance.

"Well, no," said Little Chick, "I ain't a detective, although I'd like to be; but that's what th' boys call me, 'cause I'm always readin' detective stories. Do you ever read 'em?"

"Do I? Well, I should sneeze if I don't!"

"Do you like 'em?"

"Does a cat like milk?"

"Guess she does, from all accounts. Say, though, d'ye think any o' th' stories are true?"

"Well, I don't see why they shouldn't be, fer th' daily papers are full of *worse* facts every day in th' year."

"Yes, that's so."

"So you would like to be a detective here yerself, would ye?"

"You bet your buttons I would! I'd like ter get hold of a clew to some great piece of rascality, an' run some big villain to account."

"Well, Little Chick, I'll tell ye what I'll do. You hunt 'round an' find a clew, an' I'll go pards with ye. You kin do th' brain-work in th' case, an' I'll do th' scoutin' an' fightin'."

"Jingo! I'd like *that* first-rate! I think you'd make a bully pard. I thought I had my nose on th' scent o' game to-day, but I guess it's all up now. What did you say yer name is?"

"My name is Sam Sanders, but everybody calls me Sandy Sam, 'cause I've got sand in me, I s'pose. But what 'bout th' game you say ye had yer smeller p'inted at? Was it big? Was it murder, robbery, counterfeitin', insurance stealin', or what?"

"Well, I don't jest know what ye might call it. May be there was nothin' to it, anyhow. I jest got hold of a scrap of conversation, an' I figgered it out ter near somethin' or other a little off-color. That was what brought me up here an' got me inter trouble. My reg'lar place o' business is down by th' 'Brosses street ferry.'"

"Tell me all about it, Chick; an' if there's any game there, we'll go fer it, you bet! I'm on th' rampage fer any kind o' excitement jest now, an' I'll tackle anything that offers. I kem over here to paint this town with a blackin'-brush, but if I kin make a ten-strike at detective business, that's better'n Jersey butter. Jest give me th' facts o' th' case, Chick, an' I'll per-nounce upon it in th' shortest space o' while ye kin imagine. I'm a boss fer arrivin' at conclusions, I am; an' I don't gen'ally shoot very wild at th' mark either."

"Well, Sam, there ain't a wonderful right to tell, an' maybe you won't see anything in it at all; but I'll give it to ye jest as it is."

"That's th' idee, Little Rooster—I mean Little Chick; jest go ahead, an' I'll store away th' facts as fast as they fall upon th' tin-pan-nim o' my ears. I've got lots o' loft-room in my neddle, an' not much in it; so ye see there's lots o' space. Now, go it!"

"Well, this afternoon, along 'bout three o'clock, I noticed a well-dressed man a-hangin' 'round th' ferry, as if he was expectin' some one. He was purty well fixed fer looks, an' his toga were all square-cut on th' bias. He seemed ter be a real upper-ten blood, an' no discount. I should say he was thirty years old, as near as I could sum him up."

"I axed him several times if he didn't want a shine, but he shook his head 'nixey.' At last, though, he concluded he *did* want one, an' sot his hoof up on my box."

"I had jest got th' blackin' smeared on, an' was jest about gettin' down ter biz, when there came another feller along off th' ferry-boat."

"This last snoozer he slaps my shine on th' back, an' sez:

"'Hello, Henry! Ye're here an' a-waitin', I see.'"

"Then my shine he looks round quick, an' answers:

"'Waitin'! I should say so! Where th' deuce have ye been so long?'"

"'Why, jest where ye sent me,' th' other feller replies. 'It was no small job, an' it took time.'"

"'Well, is it all arranged?' th' one called Henry asked."

"'Yes,' sez t'other feller; 'it's all fixed. Th' party will be expected about nine o'clock to-night.'"

"'What's th' figger?' sez my shine—Henry."

"'Fifty dollars a month, cash down in advance,' sez t'other."

"'Thunder!' sez Henry. 'Ain't it pretty heavy, James?'"

"'There, ye see, I got t'other feller's name, too.'"

"'Maybe it is,' sez James, 'but it's a risky job.'"

"'Yes, so it is,' sez Henry. 'I'll have ter pay it, I s'pose.'"

"'Yes, I ruther reckon ye will,' sez James. An' then he added:

"'How's th' sick party?'"

"'He's bad—*awful* bad,' sez Henry. 'He can't last many hours.'"

"'Then everything is ripe,' sez James."

"An' all th' time I was a-puttin' a patent-leather shine on Mr. Henry's boots, an' no one

could have guessed that I was a-listenin' to what they said, fer they spoke awful low.

"Yes," sez Henry; "everything is all fixed an' ready."

"An' then he axed:

"What time will th' feller come?"

"Bout eight o'clock," sez James.

"An' you gave him th' address, so he wouldn't fergit—No. — Madison avenue?" sez Henry.

"Yes, he understands that all straight," sez James.

"But," sez Henry, "how'll I know him, in case you ain't there when he comes?"

"Why," sez James, "soon's he stops he'll give three sharp whistles, an' then you'll know it's th' right cab."

"Great jumpin' he-hoss a-kickin'!" cried the Jersey Scout, at this point. "Why, Little Bantam—I mean Little Chick, I kem over here from t'other side in that very identic cab!"

"You did?"

"Yes, I did! But, go on an' finish yer story."

"That's 'bout all of it, Sam. I was 'bout done then, an' th' men went away."

"An' you was goin' up ter that house ter see th' game out, when them three fellers pitched inter ye, I take it?"

"Yes, that's jest where I was goin' on a scout. Say, though, how did you come ter be in that cab? An' how do ye know it was th' one my two fellers was a-talkin' 'bout?"

"Well, how I kem to be in th' cab, was this: I'm a feller who don't take no stock in walkin' when I can ride, an' don't perpose ter pay my fare when I kin go deadhead; an' as I was a-comin' over here, an' th' cab was a-comin' over here, too, an' no one was in th' cab afore-said, I concluded ter occupy it myself. So, I watched my chance an' got in. Oh! wasn't it jest boss, though! Did ye ever take a ride in a cab, Chickens—I mean Little Chick?"

"No; not unless ye call it a ride ter hold on behind an' swing yer legs up over th' axle."

"Well, I don't. That sort o' ride ain't bad ter take, but—Lordy! it can't hold a candle ter a ride inside! Half yer life's gone, Little Chick, if ye never had a cab-ride."

"That don't explain how you kem ter know that cab was th' one I heard th' two men a-talkin' 'bout, though."

"Sure 'nough, Chick, so it don't. But I'll tell ye. Th' cabby drove up to a fine-lookin' house up there on th' high-toned part of th' avenue, an' stopped. An' th' minute he stopped he whistled three times!"

"Then it's th' same one, sure! Say, Sam, this may be our chance! S'pose we take up th' trail an' sift this case out, an' see what it all means anyhow. What d'ye say? Are ye with me?"

"I am!" cried Sam. "I'm with ye, Little Chick, fer bugs or bullion. I'll stand to yer back till yer belly caves in. You jest do th' brain-work, as I said afore, an' I'll 'tend to th' fightin'. I'm a regular old Thomas Q. Cat on th' fight, I am; I'm as full o' fight, an' stay-thar, an' sand, as any feller ye ever heard tell of."

"Then ye think there is somethin' in this case, do ye?"

"Of course I do! I'll bet my boots, holes an' all, Chick, that there's a nigger in th' wood-pile, somewhere!"

"That's my idee, too, Sam; an' s'pose we set ter work an' hunt him out."

"All right, Chick, I'm with ye, tooth an' toe-nail."

"Bully fer you! What'll we do first?"

"Well, let's see. I b'lieve I was ter per-nounce on th' case as soon as ye gave me th' pertic'lers; so I'll perceed ter re-lucy-date, an' see how it looks. I'll sum up what you know, an' then what I know; an' then we'll sum th' two sums up together, an' see how it sums."

"Now, your shine Henry—he sent that other feller—James, over ter Jersey fer somethin'. What was that somethin'? Well, from what they said it was a 'risky job' o' some sort, an' would cost 'fifty dollars a month.' That shows that it was somethin' that would be carried on fer months, an' perhaps years. Then Jamesey said th' 'party' would be expected 'bout nine o'clock. What does that look like? It looks ter me like as if it was some man or woman who was ter be sent over ter some place in Jersey ter board, and that the pay would be fifty dollars a month."

"You heard 'em say a cab would come over at eight o'clock, an' that when th' cabby kem to th' house he would whistle three times. That's what you know."

"Now, I know that a cab *did* come over from Jersey, an' went to a house on Madison avenue

about eight o'clock, an' that as soon as it got there th' cabby whistled jest three times. Then purty soon three men kem out o' th' house, two of 'em a-leadin' th' other one, who seemed ter be sick, an' they all got into th' cab. That's what I know."

"Is that so?" Little Chick exclaimed. "Did three men come out and go away in that cab—really?"

"Of course, it's so! D'ye s'pose I'd lie ter ye, on sich short acquaintance? If ye begin ter doubt my rascality already, Chick, I guess I'll go back ter Jersey an' let ye paddle yer own canoe."

"Oh, don't git mad, Sam! You know well 'nough I don't doubt your word. I was only surprised that we should happen ter be on this case together in sich a queer way."

"Well, it is ruther queer, when ye come ter think how strange it is, that's a fact. But, there's lots o' queer things happenin' in America. We may be hanged afore we die, for all we know."

"Well, I'll be hanged if I want ter be, anyhow."

"No, nor me. But this ain't biz. Now, I'll sum up what you know an' what I know, an' we'll see whether we know anything at all or not. You knew a cab was a-comin' over here, an' I know it *did* come. You knew it was a-comin' ter take some one away, an' I know it *did* take some one away. Now what kind o' a proceedin' is it? Is it square an' true-blue? or, is it crooked work? Give us your opinion, little feller."

"Well, Sam, I think there is some crooked business about it. You know that feller James asked how th' 'sick party' was, an' Henry answered that he was 'awful bad,' an' couldn't last many hours; an' now you say it was a sick man that was taken away in th' cab. It seems ter me mighty funny how a man so sick as that could be taken away ter be boarded for 'fifty dollars a month.' Don't it seem so to you?"

"Yes, th' clouds o' mystery *do* seem to hover over th' case, an' no mistake."

"An' shall we tackle it?"

"Of course we shall! You're jest a-pinin' ter become a detective, an' now's yer chance. Jest go in, Chick, an' see ef ye can't do somethin' that will make ye feel like th' hero in some o' th' stories."

"All right, Sam, we'll go fer it together. What'll we do first?"

"Well, let's go back an' view th' house."

"All right!"

And they turned back.

CHAPTER IV.

GETTING TO WORK.

THE house, No. — Madison avenue, which Sandy Sam and Little Chick were interested in, was a fine-looking one, and evidently the home of a wealthy family.

"That's th' place," said Sam, when the two boys arrived before it, on the opposite side of the street. "I gen'ally don't have ter take but one squint at a house ter remember it next time I see it."

"Yes," said his companion, "this is th' number th' feller said."

"Well, here we be," the Scout mused, "an' what are we goin' ter do 'bout it? We could no doubt create a sensation by rushin' in and declarin' ourselves ter be detectives, and demandin' ter know th' why an' why for o' all this mystery; but I guess detectives don't do biz that way. Anyhow, there may be nothin' in this thing, and if there ain't, then we want lots o' room ter drop."

"But, Chick, you was ter do th' brain-work, and I was only ter do th' fightin'; so jest put on yer thinkin'-cap an' give me your apin'."

"Well, Sam, my idee is this: Th' two men who went away with th' sick man will no doubt be comin' back ag'in some time to-night, an' s'pose we lay an' wait fer 'em? They may come back in th' same cab, an'—"

"No they won't, Chick, they won't come back in that cab, you bet! That feller hired a Jersey cabby on purpose so he wouldn't be seen here ag'in. Leastwise that's my way o' thinkin'. Besides, they wanted one who would know all about th' wilds o' Jersey. That don't matter, though, fer I know that cabby like a hawk knows chickens; an' I kin find him any time I want ter."

"What you say 'bout waitin' here till them two fellers comes back, though, is real hoss-sense, an' we'll do it. We may be able ter git hold o' th' front end o' th' tangle, an' begin ter git it out o' snarl. No use ter set out now ter foller that cab, 'cause it can't be did. Cabs don't leave trail 'nough fer a Rushun blood-

hound ter foller, 'specially here in mighty Gotham. There's no Texan preairie about this kind o' ground, I kin tell ye."

On the side of the street where the two boys were, was a vacant lot, around which was a board fence.

This side of the street was not well-lighted, and the Jersey Scout and Chick dropped their boxes and sat down upon them, with the fence to support their backs.

And thus they prepared for their first vigil in their first detective case.

"So, you want to be a real, sure-nough detective, do ye, Chick?" Sam presently queried.

"Well, ain't we real an' sure-nough detectives? Ain't we a-pipin' our first case? What more d'ye expect?"

"What more do I expect? Why, I'd like to git right down to fine work; climb up ter th' house-top; slip inter a six by ten winder; rescue th' heroine; have th' big rascal chase me downstairs, four steps at a lick; escape by the skin o' my teeth; great 'plause an' red fire etcetera, an' so forth. Oh! I hunger fer th' real git-up-an'-git excitement, I do; somethin' ter make a feller git right up an' hump himself! I'm Sandy Sam, I am; th' chief of street scouts—the Jersey flopper, and people say that I'm a reg'lar old fire-eater. You jest want ter come over ter Jersey some time, Chick, an' see this rooster on his own dung-hill: an' I tell ye it'll do ye good. Any of th' boys over there kin tell ye all about me, an' th' history o' my misspent career will thrill ye like a real live romance. I've been inter more fights than I could count in an hour; an' I've only been licked twice in my life. When you come over there you jest say you're a friend o' 'Sandy' Sam's, and ye'll be treated like a lord. Th' boys won't be able ter do 'nough fer ye. But, Chick, you'd best not talk so much, fer some one will come along an' bounce us out o' here."

"Me not talk so much!" cried Little Chick, in surprise. "Why, it's you a-doin' all th' chin-nin'!"

"Oh! come away, Chick! Me a-doin' all th' chin-nin'! What's a-bitin' ye? You're off yer ker-base, little feller 'way off. I don't say a dozen words in ten seconds. You must be a-dreamin', ain't ye? If ye think I'm a chinner, ye'd jest orter hear my mammy! Lordy! When dad comes home with a little too much German influence in his b'iler, she jest makes Rome howl now, I tell ye. Her tongue is hung in th' middle, an' wags at both ends; ter say nothin' 'bout its bein' hung on a pivot so's ter swing round an' round. Did ye ever watch th' business-end of a sewin' machine when it is a-runnin' at full speed, how it goes up an' down at a two-forty gait? Well, that can't hold a candle ter mam's jaws, when she gits down ter biz. Th' way she kin put a double French twist onto her Hibernian accent is a caution ter cats. An' there's no stoppin' ter oil cranks, nor ter thread shuttles, nor ter set needles, or anything o' that sort. She jest opens th' throttle an' lets her whiz. An' dad? Well, he don't say much till he gits his Dutch clear up, and then—well a Sioux war-dance is nothin', compared with it. They jest dance a polka, to the tune of 'Rocky Road ter Dublin' with variations; an' there's gen'ally more variation to it than there is tune. An' me—'Sandy' Samuel! Well, I jest take it in an' enjoy it till th' flat-irons, rollin'-pins, crockery-ware, an' other brick-a-bracks begins ter fly around too premiscous-like, an' then I light out an' let 'em have th' hull field to themselves. But, Chick, this ain't biz, an' I must request ye ter not say another word."

"But, Sam—"

"There! I know'd it! Ye can't keep still if ye wanted ter! It beats me how a feller kin talk so much, an' retain health o' body an' vigor o' mind."

"Fer goodness' sake, Sam, is all Jersey boys like you?" Chick asked.

"How d'ye mean?" Sam queried.

"Why, fer talkin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, Chick, I do wag my jaws ter some extent, don't I?"

"I should say you do."

"No, they ain't all so. But we never let any of 'em go 'way from home unless they kin fight an' talk equal ter meet almost any emergency o' life."

And thus the two boys talked on, and two hours slipped quickly away.

At the end of that time a man was seen to ascend the steps of the house across the way, and enter.

"Is that one of 'em?" Little Chick quickly asked.

"Yes," responded Sam, "that's one of th' fellers. I know him by his overcoat. Is he one of th' men you saw at th' ferry?"

"Can't say fer sure, Sam, but I think he is. Had mutton-chop whiskers, hadn't he?"

"Yes."

"Then he's th' one called Henry."

"Well, now what's ter be did? You represent th' brains o' this Co., so jest say what's ter be th' next go."

"That's a rhyme, Sam."

"That so? I don't know nothin' 'bout rhyme. May be if ye ketch it an' put horns on it, it'll be a cow. But, no more foolin' now, Chick. Fun is fun, an' biz is biz; an' when ye come ter git th' two mixed up, that makes *funny-biz*; an' we don't want no funny biz jest now."

"Well, Sam, I don't know *what* we orter do, now. What do *you* think would be best?"

"I'm blamed if I know either, Chick. It strikes me this here detective life ain't all a bed o' roses. S'pose we stay right here an' keep on a-watchin' th' house?"

"What would we watch it fer?"

"There ye've got me. I don't know."

"No, nor me."

"Well, s'pose we go over an' arrest everybody, from th' boss o' th' mansion down to th' cook."

"Oh! Don't fool about—Hello! I wonder what's up now?"

The last exclamation was caused by seeing lights suddenly begin to flash from room to room in the house.

"Give it up!" cried Sam. "Guess somethin' has broke loose there, for sure."

A moment later the door opened suddenly, and a ducky—evidently a servant—rushed out and started up the avenue as fast as he could run.

"Sandy" Sam and "Little Chick" were now both upon their feet, and wide-awake for business.

Presently the door opened again, and a boy—a colored lad—came out.

He, too, hastened away at once.

"Come, Chick," said Sam, "let's get nearer to th' seat o' war, an' perhaps we kin learn somethin'." And he at once started across the avenue, Chick following him.

Reaching the other side they stopped, and then began a close inspection of the house.

Lights were still moving about, and it was evident that the house was filled with some unusual excitement, whatever the cause.

Sam and his "pard" stationed themselves behind some large trees immediately in front of the entrance, and waited to see what would happen next.

In the course of twenty minutes or half an hour the ducky who had first left the house came back, bringing with him another man.

At sight of him Chick gave Sam a punch, and whispered:

"That's t'other feller, Sam, th' one Henry called James."

"Is it?"

"Yes."

"Well, pick up your ears now, an' we'll hear what they're a-sayin'."

"What time did you say it happened?" the man asked of the servant, as they came up.

"Not more'n erbout half an hour ago," the ducky replied.

"And who was with him at the time? Was he alone?"

"Oh! no, doctor. De nurse was with him, sah, when he pass' 'way."

And then they passed on and up the steps, and entered, and no more could be heard.

"Somebody's kicked th' bucket in that house, sure's ye live," said Sandy Sam. "Maybe it's th' sick man ye heard th' two fellers talkin' about this afternoon, Chick."

"How kin it be, if he was tooken away in th' cab?" Chick questioned.

Sam scratched his head.

"That kinder knocks *that* idee in th' head," he growled. "I wonder who it *kin* be?"

"Give it up!" Chick responded. "Say, though; did ye notice that th' nigger called that man 'Doctor'?"

"Yes. D'ye s'pose he is one?"

"S'pose he *must* be. But it's a little funny that t'other feller didn't call him by his handle this afternoon, don't ye think so?"

"Yes, I do. Doctors is always called 'Doctor.' No gettin' 'round *that* p'int, Chick."

"Well, I'd give a dollar jest ter know th' bull history an' secret an' mystery o' this game, anyhow," Chick declared. "I'm gittin' a reg'lar fever over it. What kin we do, Sam?"

"Jest what I'd like ter know! I'd like ter go inter that house an' take a look 'round, 'bout half an hour or so, but of course that can't be did. Th' household is too much on the go, jest at present, an' I'd be seen an' gobbled up fer a sneak. No, can't do *that*, that's flat!"

"Then what *kin* we do? High old detectives we are, when we don't know how ter make a move. I guess we'd better give it up, an' go back ter polishin' hoof-gear."

"Me give up? Not much I won't!" Sam cried. "I'm as full o' sand an' grit, an' up-an-down vim an' stick-to, as a barrel o' 'lasses is full o' sweet. Me give up? Well, I ruther guess not! I'm jest gittin' interested in this thing now, an' ye couldn't *buy* me off. No, sir-ee, bob, boss-tail an' flyin'-jib! I'm into this thing fer ducats or death, an' I'm a-goin' ter see it out, if there's any 'out' to it. You said you wanted ter be a detective, Chip, an' now you're ready ter give up at th' first little trouble that comes along. You've got ter take in a cargo o' sand, Chick, or ye won't git thar, that's sure."

"Well, if *you* say stick to it, Sam, stick to it, it is; an' I'm with ye. I'll stick to ye like a brother, Sam, or a patent porous-plaster."

"That's th' talk, Chick! Now you've said somethin'! Give us yer hand on it, pard, an' we'll go inter th' case now ter do or die! We'll turn this here mansion jest inside out, an' if there's any skeletons a-layin' 'round loose, we'll find 'em. We're on th' rampage fer fame an' glory, now, an'—Hello! Here comes that little nigger boy back ag'in! I'll jest brace him fer information!"

CHAPTER V.

WHAT SAM LEARNS.

"SANDY" SAM had espied the little ducky at quite some distance, and hurried forward to meet him before he could reach the house, closely followed by "Little Chick."

"Say, Tar-beel, do you live there in that house?" Sam asked, the moment he met the ducky boy, at the same time jerking his thumb back toward the house.

"Yes, I lives dar, yo' white trash yo', but my name ain't no Tarheel, an' doan' yo' fer-git it."

"What is yer cog, then?"

"My name am Henry Clay Snow."

"Well, Mr. Snow, ye needn't put on so many lugs, anyhow. I'd make a black mark all over th' sidewalk here with yer homely carcass, if I wasn't a good old-style Republican; but I am, an' so I love ye like a brother. I'd fight, bleed, an'—run away fer ye, if it was necessary. Where ye been?"

"I's been to de telegraff orfice, ter send a telegraff."

"Oh! ye have, eh?"

"Yes. But, yo' mustn't distain me heah, fer I's in hurry, I is."

"Oh! Yo' is, is you? Well, I jist stopped ye ter say that yer Master Henry wants ye ter go right *back* ter th' telegraff orfice, an' tell th' boss there ter put that telegram off on th' double-quick."

"Does yo' know Marsa Henry?"

"Well, if you'd blacked his boots 'bout a million times, more or less, wouldn't *you* know him?"

"Speck I should. An' he tol yo' ter tell me that?"

"Say, you lump o' darkness! d'ye s'pose I'd stop ye here an' tell ye a lie? Ef ye don't believe me, jes' go on. I don't keer a continental gum-drop whether ye go or not!"

"Oh! I's a-goin'! Ef Marsa Henry said go why I goes!"

"Sensible nig! Come on, Chick, an' we'll go with him, bein' as we are goin' right along that way." And Sam clutched Chick's arm, to make him understand the game he was playing, and to caution him to take his cue accordingly.

The little ducky turned about, and the three went down the avenue together.

"Say, Snowy, what's all th' excitement about in th' house?" Sam asked, as they walked along.

"Why, doan' yo' know?" the little ducky queried.

"No, I don't know. How *should* I? I ain't been in th' house, an' yer Master Henry didn't tell me."

"Why, poor ol' Marsa William, he gone died!"

"Th' deuce he has! Let's see, though, who was he?"

"Why, Marsa Henry's father, ob course."

"Oh! yes, seems ter me I *have* heard o' him. What was th' difficulty with him?"

"I doan' jest 'member what they did call it, now, but it was some sort o' 'tajus misease—"

"You mean 'tajus disease!'"

"Yes, that's it; but I furgit what they called it. No one was 'lowed ter see him, 'cept de nurse."

"An' he was with him when he kicked th' bucket, I s'pose."

"Yes."

"Well, say, Snowy, who was it went off in th' cab, 'bout eight o'clock?"

"Went off in a cab?"

"Yes, went off in a cab."

"An' out ob de Morseby mansion?"

"Is Morseby yer Master Henry's last name?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I mean out of th' Morseby mansion, then."

"Why, I doan' know ob any one a-goin' 'way in a cab."

"Maybe you was out o' th' house 'bout that hour."

"Did yo' say erbout eight o'clock?"

"Yes."

"Why, bless yo', all ob us was out in de rear erbout dat time, fer de doctor was a-flumigatin' all de lower part ob de house."

"*Whew!*" Sam whistled. "Chick, have ye got yer ears cocked?"

"You bet yer life I have, an' full-cock, too."

"What is yo' talkin' erbout?" the little ducky asked, looking from one to the other.

"That's only a joke we git off once in a while," Sam explained. And he added:

"Is there any one else sick at th' mansion, Snowy?"

"Yes, one ob de old servants, name ob Jones, he been sick a long time. Kinder got loose in his upper story, an' had ter keep him in his room. Come ter think ob it, if any one went off in a cab, may be it was Massa Henry a-takin' old Jones to de 'sylum. He been sayin' he *must* take h m purty soon, anyhow."

"That may be it," said Sam.

This bit of information rather upset his pet theory that there was foul play going on.

It was reasonable enough, that Jones had been taken to an asylum.

But, was it likely that a man would have been sent over to Jersey City to hire a cab for that purpose? Was it reasonable that so much mystery would hover over the affair? And, was it likely that Jones would have been taken out of the house while it was being fumigated downstairs?

Sam rather thought not, and clung to his first idea stronger than ever.

"Who is James?" he asked, turning again to the little ducky, after a few moments' reflection.

"James? I doan' know as I knows ob *any* one ob dat name 'roun'—Oh! James mus' be de doctor! I's heard Marsa Henry call *him* James, sometimes."

"What's th' doctor's last name, then?"

"His name am Doctor Gallons."

"Where does he swing his shingle?"

"Where do he do *what*?"

"Swing his shingle—rake in his fees—hang up his hat—I mean where is his office?"

"Oh! Well, why doan' yo' say what yo' mean, den? His office am a little furdur up de avenue dan our house am."

By this time they had arrived at the telegraph office, and all three entered.

"Say, boss," said the little negro, "my marsa sent me back here ter ax yo' ter please send that ar' telegraff off on th' double-quick."

"You may tell him it is gone," was the reply.

"An'," spoke Sam, "he wanted me ter read it, an' see jest how he worded it. He's so some over—I mean overcome—with grief, that he don't half know what he is a-doin'."

The telegraph man eyed Sam rather doubtfully.

"He asked *you* to read it?" he repeated.

"That's 'bout what I said," Sam insisted, "or words ter that effect."

"You're a *likely*-looking specimen to be asked to read a gentleman's telegram!"

"May be I be; but I can't help bein' beautiful, any more'n a rose kin help bein' sweet. You kin jest bet high on *cne* thing, though, an' that one thing is—that I mean business. When I'm asked ter do a favor fer a gentleman, I gen'ally tries my best ter do it; an' I hope ye'll allow me ter see that dockymet 'thout further waste o' words."

The man behind the counter smiled.

"How do you come to be upon such intimate terms with Mr. Morseby?" he asked.

"Great tomcats!" cried Sam. "Ain't *you* on good terms with *your* best customers?"

"Oh! Mr. Morseby is a customer of yours! Well, I suppose you are telling the truth, so here's the telegram." And taking a slip of paper from a file-hook, the man handed it over.

"Sandy" Sam could read, and in a moment he had the contents of the telegram stored in his brain.

It was as follows:

"New York, Sept. 10, 18—.

"CHARLES MORSEBY, St. Louis, Mo.:—

"Father is dead. Died this evening, after a short illness. The funeral must take place to-morrow. Highly contagious fever. HENRY MORSEBY."

"That's all reg'lar," Sam declared, as he handed the telegram back to the telegrapher. "It reads jest 'bout as Mr. Morseby wanted it ter read, I guess."

"Suppose it hadn't what would you have done?" the man asked.

"Why," Sam responded, "we could 'a' sent word to him by this little nig, an' he could then send another one."

"You're quite a bright lad."

"Me bright? Lordy! Ye'd orter see th' rest o' th' fambly! Sides, I ain't near as bright now as I am after mam gits done floppin' th' wash-rag about over my carcass on Saturday nights. I'm a little angel then, fer sure."

"Well, if that is the case, the sooner Saturday night rolls round again, the better it will be for you," said the man, laughing, as he turned away.

The three boys then went out.

"Where ye goin' now, Snowy?" asked Sam.

"Home, ob course."

"Well, say, who is Charles Morseby? I never heard o' him afore. He's th' one th' telegram was sent ter."

"He am Marsa Henry's brother. He done been out West fer some time."

"What kind o' feller is he?"

"Bully! Like him better'n Marsa Henry, long sight?"

"Do, eh?"

"Yes, yo' bet I do! He never 'buse me, an' he never spoke cross ter Marsa Wilham."

"Then Henry does abuse ye, an' did cut up rough on th' old man, eh?"

"Yes, awful."

"Well, say, Snowy, how many persons live there in th' Morseby mansion anyhow? I don't mean nigs, an' cooks, an' so forth; but th' fambly."

"Well, dere's only Marsa Henry dere now."

"No women folks?"

"No. De old missus gone died two or free years ergo."

"Well, Snowy, you'd better cut fer home now, or yer boss'll be after ye post-haste, with a stuffed club."

"But yo' said he tol' yo' ter tell me ter come back heah, didn't yo'?"

"Yes; but I didn't tell ye ter stay all night, so—git!"

The darky started off, and then Sam and Chick turned their steps in the opposite direction and proceeded down-town.

"How was that fer high, Chick?" Sam exclaimed. "Didn't I tell ye I was jest a rip-snorter? If you want ter be a detective, you jest stick ter me, an' I'll be th' makin' of ye. Oh, I should grin! Won't we jest make old Rome howl afore we're done with this here case? I tell ye, Chick, we're a sandy team, we are; we're reg'lar old Pinkertons!"

"Oh, that was jest boss!" Chick responded. "How you did stuff that little nig's head! Lordy! I don't see how ye had th' nerve ter chin ter that feller in th' office like ye did, though."

"That was sand, Chick, SAND; pure, hard grit. That's where I gits my handle o' 'Sandy' Sam."

"There's one thing you didn't think of, though, Sandy."

"What's that?"

"Why, when that little nig gits home, his boss'll ask him where he's been, an' then th' lie will come out. Then that feller Henry'll know two chaps about our size is onto his game, an' he'll be apt ter go fer us. He'll question ther little nig, an' git all th' p'int, an' then he'll know some things that we know, an' he'll know that we know some things that mebbe he don't want us ter know; an' I bet he'll keep his top eye open fer us, an' go fer us bald-headed."

Sam's face lengthened.

"By gooseberry, Chick!" he exclaimed, "you do represent th' brains o' this Co., an' no mistake? I didn't think o' that, fer a fact. But we've been an' gone an' done it now, an' we'll have ter take th' quenseconces! There's no rose 'bout a thorn, ye know, an' we'll have ter take th' gall with th' wormwood. Don't git shaky, though, fer if we can't hold our own in this game we orter suffer."

"Well, what's th' next move?"

"Blame me if I know, Chick! I guess, though, it wouldn't be a bad idee ter put our detective skill to a red-hot test, an' go an' find

out where that cab went to with that sick man."

"Gosh! Kin ye do that?"

"Jest come over ter Jersey with me an' see if I can't. Kin ye come?"

"You bet!"

"Well, come on, then. We'll go ter my home an' put up till th' mornin's golden sunlight peeps inter our winders, an' then we'll git up an' buckle on th' armor fer victory or—defeat. We're inter this thing fer sure, now, an' it's bullion ter greenbacks we win!"

And the two crossed the ferry to Jersey City.

CHAPTER VI.

A DOMESTIC JUBILEE.

ARRIVING on Jersey soil, "Sandy" Sam took his new friend home with him.

Sam lived in a tenement-house on Railroad avenue, in that quarter of the city known as the "Crow's Nest."

The house was an old one, and presented a very tumble-down appearance, as did many another in the same vicinity.

It harbored about twelve families, and the Sanders family lived on the top floor but one.

When they reached the house, Sam pushed open the front door with his foot, and bade Chick follow him.

"Don't be 'fraid, Chick," he said, as he started to lead the way up-stairs. "There's nothin' here worse'n roaches an' bedbugs."

"An' I'm well 'quainted with them," Chick replied, "so lead on."

"If ye git tired afore we git up ter th' Sanders' parlor door, Chick, just say th' word, an' we'll stop an' rest fer a spell. We're high-toned, I tell ye, an' live 'way up in th' world."

"Don't worry 'bout me, Sam, fer I'm good for ten or a dozen flights, anyhow."

"You're all right, then."

When they came to the door, Sam tried it, found it unlocked, and entered.

Chick followed.

A woman was seated beside a table, mending some clothes.

"Hello! mom, you up yet?" Sam exclaimed.

"Yis, I'm up yit. An' where have you been, I'd like to know?"

"Well, ye see, mom, I went over ter New York ter see a show, an' give myself a little treat; but I didn't git ter see one, for I had a fight—"

"A foight! An' ye're always after havin' a foight, me thinks!"

"Most always, mom, when there's any call fer it, ye're right! But, 'low me ter interduce my new pard, Mr. Tommy Twister; otherwise 'Little Chick!'"

The woman glanced at Chick and nodded, saying:

"How do you do, sir?"

"Fair, I thank ye, m'am," Chick replied.

"An' where do ye live, may I ask ye?"

"In New York, m'am."

"Ah! Ye're a New York b'y, are ye?"

"Yes, m'am."

"Where's dad?" Sam asked.

A stern expression came over the woman's face at once, her eyes gleamed, and she answered:

"Where is he, indade! Sure, it's meself that has not seen him th' night!"

"An' you're a-waitin' up fer him?"

"I am that same!"

"Well, now, ye'd better lope off ter bed, mom, an' give dad a rest fer once."

"Sam Sanders! D'ye know who ye're a-talkin' to? Sure, an' if it isn't yerself that's lopin' ter bed instanter, I'll have th' hide off ye! Git!"

"Come, Chick," Sam said, as he made a hasty retreat, "this is no place fer us. Let's git ter our roost." And opening the door of an adjoining room, he and his companion entered.

It was a very small room, being barely large enough for a bed and one chair, but no more. But, as Sam explained, it was plenty big enough to sleep in, and that was all he cared for.

"Lordy! Did ye catch on to the signs, Chick?" the Street Scout whispered, as soon as the two were in bed.

"What signs?" Chick asked.

"Why, th' war-cloud a-risin' in th' East. Th' evidences o' comin' strife."

"No, I ain't seen nothin'. What d'ye mean?"

"Well, maybe you ain't used ter sich things, Chick, but I am. Didn't ye notice that th' broom was a-standin' in close proximity to th' door? Didn't yer optics reveal th' fact that th' rollin'-pin was close ter hand on th' table? Didn't yer observant mind grasp th' idee that flat-irons hav no business ter be on th' stove-hearth at this hour o' night! Didn't ye twig that brok-

en gridiron a-layin' on th' chair? Well, I did, at first smile."

"Seems ter me I did notice th' gridiron, Sam; but what o' it?"

"What o' it? Why, sich signs portend a comin' domestic jubilee—a reg'lar fambly hop-scotch—a ginerwine walk-around. You jest wait till dad comes a-rollin' home by-'n'-by, full as a guzzler, with lots o' German soothin'-syrup an' Jersey lightnin' up his nose, an' if ye don't hear a Turkish reville in th' adjoinin' territory, it'll be surprisin'. If there ain't a Ceylonese devil-dance in th' next room, I'll git up an' eat me boots—holes an' all."

"Ye don't mean there'll be a fight, do ye?"

"That's 'bout th' size o' th' idee I was endeavorin' ter convey ter ye, Chick."

"Ginger! Maybe I'd best git out o' heer!" Chick exclaimed.

"No ye needn't. You jest lay right here, an' ye won't git hurt."

A few minutes later the hall door was heard to slam, and then a heavy footstep sounded on the stairs.

"Be ye asleep, Chick?" Sam asked, giving his companion a punch.

"No."

"Well, rouse up now, an' hear th' rumpus. Th' gov'nor's a-comin'. D'ye ketch on to th' wobble o' his Teutonic foot-fall? He's fuller'n a 'biled owl."

The two boys sat up in bed, and a sound was heard in the next room.

"That's mom!" Sam whispered. "She's graspin' th' broom an' arrangin' her other implements o' warfare ter begin hostilities. Look out now, fer th' ball is about ter open!"

The coming man had now reached the landing, and at that moment opened the door.

"Yeou breute!" cried the woman the moment the man entered, as she pushed the door shut behind him with an awful bang that fairly shook the house—"yeou breute!"

"D'ye grab fast ter th' French twirl o' that 'you brute'?" queried Sam.

"Yes, I nail it," Chick responded.

"Vot's der matter mit you?" the man growled. "Vat for you schlam dot toor like dot? You vant ter vake der whole house oop alreaty, maybe, ain't it? Uf you do dot some more, I preak your shaw for you, an' you ton't forgot dot!"

"You break me jaw! You, ye bow-legged, bald-headed Dutchman! I'd like to see th' likes of ye do it! A foine man ye are, a-comin' home drunk at this hour of th' night, an' abusin' yer poor wife an' wakin' up yer p'aceful an' honest naybors! A foine man ye are, indade! 'What's th' matter wid me, is it? Ain't enough th' matter? It's a howlin' shame, an' that's what it is, me, a poor, hard-workin' woman, to have sich a brute for a man as you be. Why can't ye come home sober, like a dacint man should, an' not come home howlin' drunk at this hour, a-raisin' a row? An' 'don't slam th' door ag'in, is it? There!' And the woman opened the door and shut it again with even greater force than before.

"How's that fer tongue an' temper?" whispered Sam to Chick. "Come, now they're gittin' down ter fine work, an' we kin peep out." And sliding out of bed he opened the door just a little and surveyed the scene, Chick doing likewise.

"Who you means v'at comes home an' makes row mit der house an' vakes oop der fambly?" cried the man. "It vas you v'at make all der fuss, an' schlam der toor, an' holler, an' raise der Old Nick 'rout here. I coom home an' go mit mine ped an' say notings, uf you ton't pegin der racket first, maybe. You unterstant dot? Why for you schlam dot toor dot time?"

"So, it's me that does it all, is it? I'm th' wan that comes home drunk in th' dead hours of th' night, am I?" And the woman shouted loud enough to make herself heard from the top of the house to the bottom.

"Yas, it vas you. I come home, come up-stairs, I mind mine own peesness an' go mit mine ped right away all de time; put you holler an' chaw 'rout, an' raise der teuce mit me. Say! Why for you schlam dot toor dot time?"

The man was royally drunk, and tried to steady himself by holding fast to the back of a chair, while the woman stood before him in a most menacing manner, broom in hand.

"Yis, it's me! It's always me! You never do anything—oh no! An' 'why do I slam th' door, is it? Because I feel loike it! An' do it ag'in, I will too. D'ye moind that!' And she stepped forward to make good her threat.

"No you ton't!" And putting out his hand the man pushed her back.

"Ah! Ye dare to lay yer hands upon me,

do ye?" the woman fairly screamed. "I'll show ye, ye coward! I'll teach ye to come home an' bate yer wife! Ye bandy-legged son-of-a-gun, I'll brain ye!" And raising her broom, Mrs. Sanders gave her Dutch husband a sound thwack on the head.

"You hits me mit der broom!" cried the husband. "Donner!" And picking up the chair he had hold of, he threw it at his better-half.

The chair missed the woman, but struck the stove with a clatter that must have awakened every person in the house.

"You murtherin' villain!" cried the woman, making another charge with the broom. "Is it kill me ye would? Take that! an' that! I'll not have th' likes of ye a-comin' home an' slammin' th' doors, an' howlin' an' wakin' up all th' dacent people in th' house, an' b'atin' yer poor wife an' tryin' ter kill her outright! Indade I'll not! Ye'd orter be 'shamed o' yerself, so ye had! Comin' home this way, an' me a-settin' up fer ye till all hours, a-worritin' an' a-frettin' th' loife an' soul out o' me! A foine man ye are—spendin' yer money in th' rum-holes an' gin-mills, an' yer poor wife at home widout a dacent dress to her back! A foine man ye are. I'll let yer naybors know th' sort o' a hairpin ye are! I'll let 'em know how ye treat me, I will! Take that, an' that, an' that!" And the woman talked as loud as she could, and laid on her blows with the broom thick and fast.

"Look out now, Chick," said Sam, in a low tone, "dad's gettin' his Dutch up, fer sure. They'll soon be at it, hammer an' tongs. Beautiful sight, ain't it? Lordy! If sich a scene was ter be put on th' stage, nobody would think it could be so!"

By this time people in the other apartments were beginning to protest. Some one overhead was pounding the floor vigorously, and shouting for peace. Down-stairs, in the rooms beneath, it was the same. While opposite, on the same floor, a woman was begging for quietness on account of her sick child.

Such is life in a city tenement, and the picture is not overdrawn.

"Shtop dot!" cried Sanders, as he began to defend himself. "Shtop, I say!" And he made a grab for the broom.

He caught hold of it, gave it a jerk, and the woman letting go of it suddenly, down he went. But he was upon his feet again in a moment.

"You red-headed Irish-Injun squaw!" he cried. "You tink I stand dot? Not much!" And he made a charge.

Then the woman grabbed up the rolling-pin, and at it they went.

For a few moments those weapons were used to effect, and then the combatants fell back upon the flat-irons, broken gridiron, and anything else they could lay hands upon.

It was a red-hot battle.

The stove, the table, chairs, etc., were broken; the wall was knocked down in several places; a cupboard was overturned; and still the fight went on. The man's head and face were bruised, cut and bleeding, and the woman's were but little better, while their clothing was sadly torn and disordered.

Loud threats were made to call in a policeman, provided one could be found, but no attention was paid.

Presently the man, who had become almost sober, made a desperate onslaught, caught the woman by her hair, and jerked her to the floor, and then proceeded to beat her until she became insensible.

"That settles it, Chick," said Sandy Sam, who seemed little concerned about the affair. "Mom's got satisfaction now, an' there'll be peace in th' ranch fer three months. Let's ter bed!"

And to bed they went, and soon fell asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE CHICK TAKES HOLD.

AT an early hour next morning Sandy Sam and Little Chick were awake and out of bed, and lent their assistance in clearing up the debris of the battle.

Sanders and his wife were pretty badly used up, and did not speak to each other.

"We never speak as we pass by," Sam whispered to Chick, with a grin. "They won't speak fer a week or more, an' thin they'll come 'round an' be as lovin' as two kittens. That'll last fer six weeks or so, till they git th' house in order ag'in, an' then they'll begin ter bicker an' dare each other ter knock th' chip off their shoulders, blow th' feather, cross th' mark, an' so forth, till at last it'll end in a reg'lar old knock-down-and-drag-out fight. That's 'bout th' way they do it."

When the broken stove had been set up and

braced, and the pipe adjusted, some breakfast was prepared, and after partaking of it the two boys left the house.

"Now, then, Chick," declared Sam, "we must git right down to real old business. We must git right up and hump ourselves, an' find out where the cab went with that sick feller last night. That's the first link we must git hold of."

"An' by peanuts, Sam, if you kin do that you're a detective, an' no discount!"

"Well, I have a faint shadder of an idee that I jest kin do it, an' don't ye fergit it. You'll have ter help me, though."

"Oh! I'll help ye fast 'nough! Don't worry 'bout that! What ye goanter do first?"

"Well, we'll scout 'round an' find th' cabby."

"That's so; you did say ye know that feller, didn't ye?"

"You bet I knows him! I knows him like a farmer's gal knows bread an' lasses."

"Who is he?"

"His name is Denny Bunyon, an' he hangs out down 'round th' ferry."

"Then he must know you, don't he?" Chick asked.

"Well, I reckon he must, by sight; but we boys don't court favor with the cabbies. That's just where I want you ter take hold o' th' case an' do some fine work."

"How? What ye want me ter do?"

"Well, I'll tell ye. I'll p'int the feller out ter ye, ye know, an' then I want you ter go right up and tell him a ghost story. D'ye see?"

"Want me ter lie to him, eh?"

"Yes, an' lie like old fun, too. I want ye ter ax him his name, an' then tell him a New York man sent ye over ter find him, an' fee him ter take ye to th' house where the party was left last night, as ye've got a 'portant letter. See?"

"Bet yer toe-nails I do, Sam, an' I'll do my best. I'll try an' take on a cargo o' your 'sand,' an' give it to him strong."

"Bully fer you, Little Chick! You're th' stuff!"

And so the two lads talked as they proceeded down the avenue to the ferry, laying their plans and studying the points of the case they had taken in hand.

When they came near the ferry, Sam suddenly stopped, and said:

"There's his nobs, Chick, right over there."

"Which one?" Chick asked.

"Th' one with th' light hat on."

"All right, Sam, I twig him. Now, you jest keep your eye on my small figger, an' see me go fer him."

"All right. Don't be 'fraid ter give him lots o' guff."

"Oh! I'll go fer him like a Dutch uncle, you bet!"

Chick advanced to where the cabman was standing, and asked:

"Say, mister, do you know ary feller 'round here w'ot answers ter th' name o' Denny Bunyon?"

"Well, I ruther reckon I do, youngster," the cabman responded. "Why, what of it?"

"Nothin' much, only I wanted ter find a feller o' that name. Will ye tell me where I kin find him?"

"What fer d'ye want ter see Denny Bunyon?"

"None o' yer biz," Chick replied, promptly. "Ef yer don't want ter give any information, ye needn't. I'll ax some one else. You want ter know too much." And with a frown upon his youthful face, Little Chick wheeled about and started to walk away.

"Hol' on, little spunky," the cabman called after him, "don't be so tarnel independent. I'm th' man you're lookin' fer."

Chick stopped.

"Well, why didn't ye say so, then? Fer a half-size hunk o' second-hand chewing-gum, I wouldn't have nothin' ter do with ye now, 'tall! If there's anything I do hate, it's one thing more'n another. Sure your name's Denny Bunyon, be ye?"

"Of course that's, my name! D'ye s'pose I'd lie to ye?"

"Well, I don't know. If ye wasn't a cabby, I'd say ye might; but bein' ez ye are a cabby—Say, though, I want ter see ye."

"Well, look at me, then."

"I mean I've got somethin' ter tell ye—a love-story ter murmur inter yer ear, ez it were. Be ye disposed ter hearken?"

"Oh! Be off with ye!"

"No, I ain't a foolin', Denny, old sport; I mean biz. A feller in New York—a reg'lar out an' out upper-tenner, sent me over here ter find Denny Bunyon, a cabby w'ot hangs out near th' ferry, as he said, an' I was ter be keerful ter not

let out my biz ter any one else; so, if you're th' jigger, you're th' game-bird I'm a-shootin' at. See?"

The cabman was now interested.

"Who was th' man that sent ye ter find me?" he asked.

"His name was Cash Down," the boy replied.

"Oh! Get out! Who ever heard of sich a name fer a man?"

"Well, that's what I calls him, anyhow. He guv me a dollar fer this job, an' that's all I want ter know 'bout him. I didn't ax him fer his card, but he hangs out at No. — Madison avenue."

"Say, step this way," said the cabman, now decidedly interested in what the boy said. And he drew him around behind his cab. "Say," he continued, "are ye givin' me a straight story?"

"Well, if I ain't I'm a-lyin', that's sure; an' you kin do jest as ye please 'bout takin' it in."

"Well, what's yer secret? Come let's have it out."

"Well, that 'ere feller w'ot I told ye 'bout sent me over here ter find you, an' told me ter say ter you fer you ter take me to th' house where th' party was left last night."

The cabman now scratched his head.

He felt like doubting the boy's story, but, how could he? If he had not been sent, how would he know anything of the affair of the previous night? It was all right, it must be; still, he would put a question or two to the lad, he thought.

"So, you didn't get hold of th' man's name?" he queried.

"No, didn't git it. There was two of 'em, though, an' th' one w'ot sent me here called t'other one 'James'."

"What sort o' lookin' men was they?"

Chick described Henry Morseby and James Gallons.

The cabman was convinced.

"It's mighty queer, though," he mused, "that he'd send sich a little feller ez you be, an' a boot-black at that."

"Ain't I good 'nough?" Chick demanded with an injured air. "Can't I carry a message as well as th' biggest man in New York? Ginger! Ter hear you talk, a feller'd think ye wanted him ter send his chief cook, supported by all th' bottle-washers! Sides, may be he knows he kin trust me. My reg'lar customers knows me, you bet!"

"Oh! That's how it stands, is it? I guess it's all straight, then. What is he sendin' ye up to that house fer, though?"

"Now, Denny, old stand-by, you've got too much curiosity in yer composish. You want ter know too much, you do, an' I ain't goin' ter answer no questions."

"Well, you're a fly little rooster, anyhow! No matter, though, I'll tell ye th' number of th' house, an' where it is, an' ye kin go an' find—"

"Hold yer hosses right there!" exclaimed the boy. "I didn't come over here ter walk all over th' hull city, an' you want ter keep that afore yer mind. You're ter take me there."

"An' who's goin' ter pay me fer it?"

"Th' same feller w'at paid ye last night. He said he'd make it right with ye. Come, now, don't keep me here all day, fer time is tin ter me, I tell ye!"

"Yes, an' so it is ter me, too. I can't take ye 'way up there, unless I'm sure o' my money fer it. How do I know but you're a-givin' me a send-off?"

"Well, ye'd orter know it we'll 'nough, if ye ain't a reg'lar born fool, an' I reckon ye ain't. How would I 'a' knowed there is any sich a feller as Denny Bunyon, if somebody hadn't told me? I was never in th' Land o' Sand afore, in my life. Ain't I been a-talkin' facts to ye ever since I sot my mill runnin'? What's th' matter with ye, anyhow? Don't yer clothes fit? or don't ye git 'nough ter eat?"

"You've got lots o' guff, fer a small boy. You ain't bigger'n a goose egg."

"An' a goose egg is no slouch of an egg!" Chick retorted.

"I meant ter say a bantam's egg."

"So much th' better! A bantam's egg brings forth th' spryest kind of a rooster, sometimes!"

"That's so. An' you're a sharp little feller. What's yer name?"

"Firin' off more questions, be ye? Come! I want ter git this job off my hands! If you're goin' ter take me to that place, I want yer ter put this old crow-bait o' yourn in motion, an' take me. I can't fool 'round here all day!"

"But, ye hain't told me what ye want ter go up there fer."

sure! An' here's jist where it turned, too. I wonder what th' plague it means, anyhow? Sary said a boy got out. Let's see if I kin spot his track. So plaguey many boys' tracks 'round here, though, I guess it won't be easy. I s'pose they're after them 'ere pears o' mine. Let me *catch* 'em at 'em! I'll give 'em pears! Plague on th' little hoodledoms! I'll— Hello! Here's th' track!"

True enough. It was the track made by "Little Chick" when he ran across the street and into the narrow lane to escape the cabman's whip.

The man followed the track into the lane, and spent some time in spying around and among the bushes to find the boy; but his efforts were not rewarded.

"Plague on him!" he muttered, as he returned to the street again, "I wonder where he kin be?"

Presently he discovered the tracks where the two boys had entered his own yard.

"Two on 'em, by mighty!" he exclaimed. "If I catch any boys in *this* yard I'll warm 'em, I bet!" And forthwith he cut a stout switch with which to do the warming.

Thus armed, he began to look around, and after some time he espied "Little Chick."

"Ah, you young baggabone!" he cried. "I've got ye, eh?" And he applied his whip vigorously.

CHAPTER IX.

A ROYAL FEAST.

At the moment when "Little Chick" was thus so suddenly and so disagreeably surprised, "Sandy" Sam had just reached the closed windows.

The man's angry voice, and a lusty yell from Chick, caused him to glance quickly down.

"Gosh all Paris green fer 'tater-bugs!" he exclaimed, half aloud, as he took in the situation at a glance. "Little Chick's got nipped."

"I've got ye, have I? ye little hoodledom!" Bill Joshkins repeated, as he continued to use his whip unmercifully upon Chick's back. "I've got ye, eh? Maybe ye want some o' my pears!"

Chick howled with pain and begged for mercy.

"Please, mister, I ain't a-doin' nothin'!" he cried. "Oh! oh! Let me go, mister, let me go! I wasn't stealin' nothin', mister; honor bright, I wasn't!"

"What was ye doin' a-hidin' in here then?" the man demanded, as for a moment he desisted using his whip. "What was ye doin'?" and he gave poor Chick a hearty shaking.

"Please, I was only a-lookin' for a ball I lost in here, mister."

"Sandy" Sam could not repress a smile, as he muttered:

"An' it ruther strikes me, Chick, that ye've found yer bawl here, too. Lordy! how I'd like ter holler out an' ax him if it ain't 'most as good's a ride in Denny Bunyon's cab! Guess I'd better keep shady, though. I might git some, too!"

"Lookin' fer yer ball, was ye?" cried the irate Joshkins. "I'll make ye bawl, ye young baggabone. Ye was a-gazin' up there to'rds them 'ere pears! Did ye 'speck ter find yer ball up there?"

As the man spoke he looked up and pointed toward a pear tree filled with fruit, and Sandy Sam's heart almost stood still. He was directly in range, and being so high up, the ivy vine afforded but scanty room for concealment. Fortunately, though, he was not discovered.

"Oh! please, mister, please don't. I wasn't goin' ter steal any pears, mister, I was only lookin' at 'em! I don't like pears, anyhow. Oh! oh!"

"Only a-lookin' at 'em, eh? Well, I'll show ye what ye'll git. That's a likely story, *that* is! What was ye lookin' at 'em fer, if ye only kem in here ter find yer ball—specially as ye don't like 'em?" and still the whip continued to be wielded with unabating vigor.

Chick's cries were almost loud enough to arouse the whole neighborhood, and "Sary," Bill Joshkins's better half, soon came rushing out of doors to ascertain what it all meant.

"Bill Joshkins," she demanded, "what be you a-doin'?"

"I'm a-warmin' this here little rascal's jacket, *that's* what I'm doin', can't ye see? I'll larn him ter come 'round here stealin' pears. I'll show—"

"Was he stealin' pears?"

"Well, no, Sary, he wasn't jest stealin', but he was a-lookin' up at 'em mighty sharp, an' I'll bet he meant to."

"No I wasn't, missus, sure an' double sure I wasn't," Chick persisted; "hope ter die if a was!"

"Why, Bill," the woman exclaimed, "this here is th' little feller what got out o' Denny's cab!"

"Th' doost he be!" cried the man. "Why, he ain't much bigger'n yer finger!"

"Don't care if he ain't," the woman declared; "he's th' very one all the same."

"Say, be you th' folkses what lives in this house?" Chick here asked.

"Of course we be," the man at once responded.

"Well, why th' old Sam Scratch didn't ye say so, then? It ain't much fun ter be sent to a place on an errand, an' then ter have th' hide almost taken off yer carcass, 'cause ye happen ter look cross-eyed at some scabby old pears, I kin tell ye!"

"Was ye sent here on a errant?" the woman asked.

"In course I was!"

"Oh! Come! That's too thin!" the man exclaimed. "If ye kem here on a errant, boy, what was ye doin' a-skulkin' out here in th' weeds an' bushes? Come, now, answer *that*!"

"Well, I kin answer that, an' not half try. I'd 'a' told ye sooner if I'd knowed ye was th' man I wanted ter see; but you was so hasty with that whip that ye didn't give me no show fer nothin'. You Jerseymen seem ter go off at half-cock, anyhow. I was sent over here from New York ter find a Mr. Joshkins, an' tell him a message; an' if you're th' man, you're my pre-simmon!"

The man and woman exchanged a meaning glance.

"D'ye s'pose he's a-lyin'?" the man questioned.

"No, Bill, I don't," the woman answered. "Didn't he come here in Denny Bunyon's cab? Boys like him ain't ridin' 'round in cabs fer nothin'."

"Course I kem here in a cab!" Chick exclaimed. "Was told ter ax fer Denny Bunyon at th' ferry, an' then tell him ter bring me where he left th' sick man last night. Then he was ter leave me, an' I was ter hide 'round till I was sure no one was lookin', an' then knock at th' back door an' ax fer you. *That's* what I was hidin' fer."

The man and woman gave each other another meaning glance.

As for Sandy Sam, he really felt proud of his little partner.

"See here, sonny," said Joshkins, as he threw away his whip, "I'm sorry I went fer ye so rough—"

"An' so am I," Chick hastened to declare. "I don't feel as comfortable as I might, I kin tell ye. I'll tell th' boss what sort o' reception I got when I lay back."

"I *did* lay it on purty heavy, sonny, an' no mistake; but I'll make that all right. Now, who was it sent ye here?"

"Well, he told me ter say ter you that Doctor Gallons wants ter know how th' sick party is, an' ter tell you ter use him well, an' give him purty good care. That's all I knows about it."

Another exchange of glances.

"It seems funny he'd send sich a little feller, don't ye think so, Sary?" Joshkins remarked. But, before the woman could reply, Chick exclaimed:

"There! That's jest what th' man *said* he s'posed you'd say, an' he told me ter answer that he sent me 'cause I'm sich a little feller that I wouldn't be noticed. See?"

"Oh! It's all right, Bill," said the woman; "it *must* be. How could he know what he does if it wasn't?"

"That's so, Sary, an' I guess it's all straight."

"Of course it's straight," Chick declared. "D'ye s'pose I'd come clear over heer ter tell ye a lie? Not much!"

"Well, my lad," said Joshkins, "you kin tell th' doctor that th' sick party is better. An' you kin tell him that I have to keep his face bandaged to keep him from talkin' too much. Ha, ha, ha! Yes, tell him that. Tell him I have to keep th' bandage on his face so he won't hurt himself talkin'."

And the man laughed as though there was a huge joke somewhere.

"Cranberry tarts an' punkin'-pies!" muttered the Street Scout, as he listened eagerly to catch every word. "I'll bet that means th' man is gagged so he can't holler out for help! An' great jumpin' hoss-fly! ain't Little Chick th' boss liar? I'm proud o' him, I am, an' I'll bet he'll git out o' this fix jest as slick as a greased eel! He's jest th' pard fer me, he is, an' I'll stick to him jest as long's th' lurid light o' life burns. Won't I give it to him strong about th' lickin' he got! I'll tease th' life half out o' him!"

"That's all right," Chick replied, when Joshkins was done laughing, "I'll tell him jest what ye say. Come, though, Joshey, old feathers: you said you'd make it all right with me fer that lickin'. Now's yer time. No time like th' present. Never put off till to-morrow what kin be did to-day. Small favors thankfully received; larger ones in preportion ter size. Come, now, as th' man said to th' performin' bear, let's see what ye kin do."

"That's so, Bill," said the woman; "you did promise that."

"But, Sary—"

"No 'but' about it! You jest set th' boy down at that bench under th' tree there, an' I'll give him a treat—somethin' that'll tickle his ribs."

And the woman hurried into the house.

Joshkins gazed after her, and Little Chick gazed at Joshkins, while Sam looked down upon them both, and remarked:

"Well, what's up now? I wonder if they're goin' ter trot out a water-millon? I'll be b'iled up fer soap-fat if that boy ain't got more gall than I thought he had! Guess I'll have ter take a back seat. He's got sand enough for a sugar refinery, he has, an' no mistook."

"Come!" cried Chick, presently, as Joshkins did not move, "bey orders, old flag-o'-truce, if ye bu'st owners! Th' boss said, lead me to a s'questered spot 'neath th' trees, an' seat me at a rusty, or rustic—or somethin'—or-other bench. Lead on, old stars an' stripes, an' I'll follow thee!" And Chick threw himself into a theatrical attitude.

Joshkins turned upon him at once, and exclaimed:

"D'ye call her *my* boss? D'ye s'pose *she* rules th' roost here? I'll show ye!" And advancing to the door he shouted:

"Sary!"

In a moment the woman appeared.

"What, Bill?" she queried.

"What be ye gettin' fer this youngster?"

"Why, a nice slice o' bread an' butter, an' honey on it."

"Bread an' butter an' honey be plagued!" cried Joshkins. "Ain't ye got nothin' better nor *that*?"

"But, Bill—"

"Plague on th' but! You jest trot out a big bowl o' milk, a dish o' clear honey, a loaf o' bread an' a plate o' butter!"

"But—"

"Do ez I tell ye!" Joshkins roared. And he made a motion as if to strike his "Sary."

The woman hastened to obey, and Joshkins turned to Chick.

"Now who's boss here?" he demanded.

"Oh, you be! I was mistook t'at time, *sure*. You're th' Briggydear-Ginerally o' this garri-son, an' no discount."

"You bet I am! If you want anything more jest say what it is, an' if it's in th' house you shell hev it. *She* wouldn't 'a' giv' ye nothin' but bread an' butter, *she* wouldn't; but I'm a-goin' ter give ye th' best we've got. Come, here's th' bench an' table; set yerself down."

Chick did so, and soon the woman appeared with the palatable viands.

"Great tom-cod and Jersey chills!" muttered Sandy Sam. "Jest see th' royal feast that kid's a-goin' ter tackle! Ef it ain't 'most er-nough ter make a feller git right up an' howl an' slap his great-gran'dad right in th' mouth, then I'll never polish leather ag'in! Jest ter think of it—me a-settin' up here in th' bushes, 'fraid ter draw a full breath fer fear I'll be found out, an' him down there a-fillin' in on th' fat o' th' land! Seems ter me he's gettin' th' bulge on me all 'round. Maybe my turn will come next, though."

When the dishes were placed on the table under the trees, Chick fell to without any ceremony whatever. And hardly had he taken a taste of each when he cried:

"Jimminy Kripps! I wish my chum—Sam—was only here ter share this with me. Oh, but this lays 'way over any feast I ever had! This honey does jest take th' puddin'! Yum! yum! yum!"

And he rolled his eyes up toward where Sam was, in a most tantalizing manner.

Sam shook his fist at him in silence.

"Well, my lad," said Joshkins, "you jest dive in an' fill up. Me an' Sary's got other things ter tend to, so we'll have ter leave ye to yerself. Eat all ye want to, an' if ye git done fore we come out, jest leave th' dishes right there."

"Oh, I'll leave th' dishes, old true-blue; don't let that worry ye."

"An' it's 'bout all he *will* leave, I guess!" growled Sandy Sam.

Joshkins and his wife entered the house, and then Chick fell to with a will.

"Yum—yum!" he presently exclaimed. "Oh, Sammy dear, if you was here!"

"You never fear but I'll be there!" Sam responded, in a low tone. "Hol' on, though," he added; "I kem up here ter git this here bit o' paper. Never do ter leave *that*!"

And he drew from between the closed shutters a small slip of paper, put it into his pocket, and then hurriedly descended to get a share of the milk and honey.

CHAPTER X.

CAPTURE AND ESCAPE.

THE moment Sandy Sam reached the ground, he rushed forward to where Chick sat.

"Come! you blamed little glutton!" he cried. "Don't eat it *all*! I'd like a bit myself."

"Hush!" Chick cautioned. "You'll have 'em out here 'fore ye know it! There's lots fer both of us, so jest pitch right in. Ginger! Ain't this jest th' boss racket?"

"Yes; an' ain't you jest the boss liar? How you did give it to that feller! Say, did ye find yer ball?"

"Oh! come, Sam, that ain't fair, after th' way I amused that feller, an' kept him from seein' you!"

"Well, you *did* do some purty neat work, Chick, an' I'm proud o' ye. You're th' best little pard I ever had!"

"Thank ye fer sayin' so. But what's our next move ter be?"

"First an' foremost, Chick, an' ahead of all, we'll 'tend strictly to stowin' away this proven-der. Lordy! Ain't this honey immense?"

"Bet your old hat it is!" Chick declared, in cautious tones. "We must be all ready ter cut an' run, though, at th' first 'pearance o' th' enemy."

"That's so," responded Sam. "We couldn't swell old Joshey's head any more, I'm thinkin'?"

"No, I guess not. He'd smell a mice, fer sure. Say, though, did ye git that paper we seen up there atween the shutters?"

"Sartain sure! I've got it safe in my pocket, an' we'll take a look at it when we git done with this job. Come! hand over that honey! Don't be a pig, Chick!"

And so they talked on, all the time causing the bread, milk and honey to disappear at a lively rate.

"Guess old Joshey ain't comin' out any more," Chick remarked half an hour later, when they had both eaten until they were so full they could scarcely breathe.

"No, I guess not," Sam agreed. "S'pose we pull stakes an' dust out?"

"All right, if you're ready. Sure ye've found out all ye want ter know?"

"Ginger! That's sol! Been so busy eatin' that I'd forgot all 'bout business. Let's crawl out here in th' bushes where we won't be seen, an' where we kin jump th' fence an' scoot at an instant's warnin', an' I'll take a look at this bit o' paper. Then, if it's necessary fer us ter mount that vine ag'in, up I'll go. We're on th' trail fer distinction an' ducats now, Chick, an' we must do our level best. By th' way, little feller, how much of th' legal tender have ye got?"

"Jest two dollars an' fifty-one cents, actual count. Why?"

"Then ye owe me jest one cent."

"I owe you a cent?"

"Jest so, partner."

"What do I owe ye a cent fer?"

"Well, we're pards, ain't we?"

"You bet!"

"An' pards most allus shares and shares alike, don't they?"

"Cert!"

"Well, then, as I've got jest two dollars an' forty-nine cents, an'—"

"Hol' on! Here's yer cent!" and Chick delivered a penny. "Lucky fer me ye've got th' two dollars 'long with yer forty-nine cents, ain't it?"

"It is, Chick, fer sure. Now we're placed on a sound financial footin', partner, an' ready fer anything. Come what may—sink or swim—live or die—I'm thine till death! Spokeshave."

"Well, come! While th' coast is all clear let's dust out!"

"All right!"

"Jest hold on there, my pippins!"

It was Bill Joshkins's voice, and both boys glanced around.

There stood Joshkins, and beside him stood the very man they least of all desired to see just then—Doctor Gallons.

"Oh! Great beeswax!" ejaculated Sandy Sam. "Cut an' run fer life, Chick!" And away they darted.

Turning suddenly, though, they both rushed into the outstretched arms of Joshkins's wife—"Sary," whom they did not see until too late, and then Joshkins and Gallons sprung forward and captured them.

"We're in fer it now, Chick," Sam quickly whispered. "Keep a stiff upper lip though, an' let me do th' most o' th' chinnin'."

"That's th' little feller, sir!" cried Joshkins, pointing at Chick, who had fallen into Gallons's hands.

"See here, you young whelp!" the doctor cried, as he gave the boy a shaking that fairly made his teeth rattle. "What do you mean by coming over here and telling this man I sent you?"

"He didn't tell him nothin' o' th' kind!" Sandy Sam hastened to proclaim.

"What do *you* know about it?" Gallons demanded, severely.

"Well, I happen ter know *all* about it; *that's* what!"

"Well, what *do* you know?"

"I know my little pardner here never *said* you sent him!"

"How's this?" And the doctor turned to Joshkins.

"I say he *did* say so!" the latter declared.

"Didn't he, Sary?"

"In *course* he did!"

"An' I say he *didn't*!" insisted Sandy Sam. Sam had a trump card in reserve, and he meant to win the trick if possible.

"Course I didn't!" Chick asserted, to help Sam, well knowing that he had *some* point in view.

"Well, what *did* you say then? Come! Answer right up, now! What *did* you say? You came here with a story of *some* kind, in which my name was mixed up, and I want to know what it was!" And Gallons glared fiercely at his young prisoner.

"I'll tell ye what he said," cried Sam; "he said—Hol' on, though. Is your name Gallons?"

"Yes, it is."

"Thought so. Well, my pard here he said he was sent here ter say Doctor Gallons wanted ter know how th' sick party was, an' ter tell th' folks ter use him well an' give him good care, or words ter that effect; but he didn't say as it was Doctor Gallons that sent him—not by a 'gallon' jug-full, he didn't!"

"Who *did* send you, then?" And the angry doctor gave Chick another shaking.

"Say! Let up on that!" Sandy Sam ordered.

"That boy's constertution is delerate, it is, an' you'll be a-shakin' somethin' out o' place in his runnin'-gear! 'Sides, ye want ter address yer Q's ter me. I appear ez constable—or somethin'—or other—fer th' defendant in this case, an' don't fergit it!"

"Well, answer my question. Who *did* send your little friend here?"

"Now you're gettin' down ter hoss-sense. I can't tell ye his name, but he was a sort o' good-lookin' feller, togged right up in style, an' wore a pair o' flowin' side-whiskers."

It was a description of Henry Morseby.

Gallons was thunderstruck. Could it be possible that Morseby had sent these boys upon such an errand? It did not look at all reasonable; and yet, how could they have known anything about a "Doctor Gallons," and a "sick man," otherwise?

Sam had played his trump well.

As for Chick, he could hardly help laughing out aloud.

"Look here, though," spoke up Joshkins, addressing Sam, "where did *you* come from, anyhow? You wasn't with this little lad at first, I'm plagued if ye was!"

"Oh! I wasn't, eh? Well, that's jest where ye're off yer ker-base, Mr. Joshey; *clear* off! Chick an' me is pards fer life, we is, an' where he goes I goes. We're jest like twins, we is, 'cept that he's a little th' smallest; but that don't matter—not a bit. He's all-wool, three-ple, an' warranted not ter fade. I was 'round here all th' time, you bet; but I didn't care to show meself while you was flourishin' that whip so sort o' reckless-like, fer I didn't know but I'd come in fer a share. See?"

"Yes, I *do* see; an' if I'd got hold o' you I'd guv ye a plagued sight more nor *he* got, plague take me if I wouldn't!"

"Glad ye didn't then, Joshey, old sport; I kin get 'long without it first-rate."

"Where did you boys see that man?" Gallons asked.

"Over in New York," Sam responded promptly.

"And you say he wanted you to ask how the sick party is, eh?"

"That's 'bout what I tried to git through me, Doc."

"Then he expected you to return and report, didn't he?"

"Reckon he did."

"Well, where did he say you would find him?"

"First he told us ter come ter No. — Madison avenoo; but he then changed his mind an' said he'd be at th' ferry ter meet us."

This last lie clinched the doubt. No. — Madison avenue was the Morseby mansion, and Gallons felt that the boy must be telling the truth.

Little Chick was almost ready to burst with suppressed laughter.

"Me a liar!" he mentally exclaimed. "Ginger! Fer square an' solid up an' down lyin', this here Sandy Sam kin jest take th' rag off th' bush every time! We're both lyin' fer a good cause, though, so I guess they won't count 'gainst us when we come ter kick th' bucket."

"I can't doubt your story, my lad," said Gallons; "but it is the strangest thing I ever knew. I don't see what Mors—what the man could have been thinking about, to send boys such as you on an errand of this kind. He knew that I was coming over here early, and he would hear from me at once. I can't understand it at all."

"No more kin I," said Sam. "What's more, I take it it's none o' my business. We've done as we was told, my little pard an' me has, an' got our money; we don't care fer nothin' else. If there's any crooked-work goin' on, we're out of it."

"What d'ye mean?" Gallons fairly thundered.

"Mean jest what I said. Did it strike ye broadside?"

"I've a notion to hand you both over to the police!"

"Oh! don't trouble yerself 'bout that! If ye want us out o' sight, we'll be goin'. *Oo-re-voor!* Thanks fer th' feast ye spread afore us, Joshkins. Sorry we can't stay with ye longer, but we kin no longer stay. Day-day, Mrs. Joshkins! That honey was jest prime! We'd like ter board with ye always."

"Well, I wouldn't care ter *have* ye always, ye little gluttons. I set out enough there fer any three men, but not a scrap remains. Be-gone! an' good riddance to ye!"

So Mrs. Joshkins retorted.

"Good-by all," said Sam, as he and Chick moved away, they having been released, "we must be goin'. We hate ter tear ourselves away, but duty calls. Give our best regards ter th' fambly, an' write soon. Our address is Twenty-two, Box alley, Hoboken. Office hours jest ez we happen ter be found in—same as th' doctors. Case ye can't find th' place at first trial, seek th' d'rectory. Jest watch our retreatin' figgers, now, ez we perceed ter lay distance behind us." And having backed away to quite a distance while Sam was speaking, the two boys suddenly turned and ran. They cleared the board fence at the rear of the yard almost at a bound, and in a moment more were out of sight.

"Tho' lost ter sight ter mem'ry dear," as they say on th' head-stone, in there," Sandy Sam remarked, when at last he and Chick came to a stop after a lively run of several minutes, and seated themselves on a low wall behind a large cemetery near the railroad tracks. "An' now, little feller," he added, "we'll go fer this bit o' paper." And drawing the paper from his pocket he spread it out upon his knee.

Meanwhile, all was excitement at the Joshkins mansion.

Scarcely had the two boys scaled the fence and disappeared, when a cab drove furiously down the street and stopped before the house.

Hearing it, Doctor Gallons, Bill Joshkins and "Sary" hurried around to the front.

There once more was the equipage of Denny Bunyon, and getting out of the cab was Henry Morseby, his face fairly distorted with rage.

Joshkins and his wife drew back, while Gallons hurried forward to the gate.

"What's up?" he demanded.

"What's up!" Morseby repeated. "Enough is up! We're suspected! Two sharp boys are upon our track like bloodhounds!"

CHAPTER XI.

DANGER AHEAD.

"Two boys, you say?" cried the doctor.

"Yes," Morseby responded—"two boys."

"Can you describe them?"

Morseby glanced at Gallons's face, and noticed that it had suddenly turned pale.

"I can give you only a vague description of them," he answered, "for I have not seen them

myself. They are evidently genuine street-Arabs, ragged and dirty. One is pretty stout, and has black hair and eyes. The other is quite a little fellow, and is called 'Chick.' They are both as full of talk as boys of their sort usually are."

"The very lads!" exclaimed Gallons, excitedly.

"What do you say?"

"Those boys were here not five minutes ago!"

"They were here!"

"They were here."

"What were they doing here? How came they here? Come! Explain!"

"They said you sent them here."

"That I sent them here?"

"Yes."

"I tell you I never saw them!"

"How came you to know anything about them, then?"

Morseby explained how Sam and Chick had stopped his colored boy, Henry Clay Snow, in the street and questioned him; how they had sent him back to the telegraph office, and how there Sam had demanded to see the telegram which he—Morseby—had sent; all of which the colored boy had told him this morning.

Gallons listened attentively.

"There is something in all this!" he declared.

"In the first place, how came these boys to know anything about it?"

"That's what I would like to know."

"And in the second place, how did they find their way out here so straight? You're right, Morseby, they are after us."

"And they've got to be silenced at once, before they can tell what they know."

"Yes; and the sooner the better."

"What did they say I sent them here for?"

"To ask how the sick man is, and to tell Joshkins to use him well."

"The deuce! Then they have got hold of the secret!"

"So it looks."

"Do they know our names?"

"They know mine, and they know you by sight and where you live."

And then Gallons went on to explain all he knew.

The two rascals were thoroughly alarmed.

It was, of course, impossible for them to know just how much the two boys knew about the case, and their uncertainty made them desperate.

That some big scheme of villainy was afoot with them, was evident.

The men had spoken in quite low tones, not caring to have their conversation overheard.

They now called Joshkins, his wife, and Denny Bunyon to them, and the whole case was sifted as fine as possible.

The more it was sifted, though, the more plain it became that the two boys were in possession of some ugly secrets.

"Confound it!" cried Morseby; "I wish I had reached here before they got away!"

"So do I," declared Gallons. "If I'd had any doubts, I'd have held them; but I hadn't. They told too straight a story."

"That's so. They seem to be as sharp as regular detectives."

These remarks were made after Joshkins and his wife and Denny Bunyon had been allowed to retire. As they were not fully into the secret, no more was said in their presence than was necessary.

"Well," queried Gallons, "what is to be done?"

"Those boys have got to be put out of the way!" Morseby asserted, most emphatically. "There is too much at stake to allow their miserable lives to stand in our path!"

"Just what I think. And, if you say so, I'll see that the job is done."

"That is what I want you to do, James, and the sooner it is done the better for us."

"Did you notice which way the little rascals went?"

"No, but I'll soon find them. I'll have to get Joshkins to help me, though."

"All right, do so. Pay him well, and I'll settle the score. Make our position secure, at any cost."

"I will, you may depend on it. The boys shall die!"

"How is everything here?"

"All right. The party has to be kept gagged for the present to prevent his making any alarm, and his arms have to be tied at the elbow so that he can't get the gag off; but everything is all serene."

"Well, I'll go back. You attend to this matter. We know where the danger lies, and we

must avert it. Those lads must be removed from our path."

All unconscious of the plot against their lives, Sandy Sam and Little Chick, seated on the low wall behind the cemetery near the railroads, proceeded to read the mysterious slip of paper which they had seen thrust through the closed shutters of the old house.

Sam had just spread it out upon his knee, when Chick said:

"Fore ye begin, pardner, I'd like ter ax ye a question."

"Well," said Sam, "ax ahead."

"What is it that smells so?"

Sam grinned.

"D'ye mean this delightful perfume—this stumnick-turnin' an' heart-rendin' odor—this gilt-edge aromar that's a-ro-min' round here? D'ye mean this sort o' ottery-roses scent that premeates th' atmufere, an' comes wafted to us on all th' breezes that blowzes? D'ye mean this jockey-club smell that greets our smellers—this delicate scent which every zephyr—"

"Oh, fer goodness sake, let up!" cried Chick.

"I mean this blamed stink!"

Sam laughed outright.

"That's what I mean, too," he averred. "It's a blended combination o' several delicate perfumes. It's 'bout ten pre cent. slaughter-house; 'bout twenty pre cent. fertilizer-factory, where they grind up old bones, dead hosses an' sich; 'bout fifteen pre cent. sassage-case factory, and th' rest is incerdentials too numerous ter mention."

"I shouldn't think th' people would 'low sich nuisances."

"Th' people not 'low 'em? See here, little feller, you never lived in Jersey City, did ye? I thought not! If ye ever want ter put up a nuisance o' any sort, Chick, or feel like runnin' a railroad all over some feller's ground, come here ter do it. Nobody'll kick. Th' people not 'low 'em! Ha, ha, ha! Th' people's a mighty one-hoss concern over here, I tell ye."

"But, Chick, this ain't biz."

"No, that's so, Sam. Go ahead an' see what ye kin make out o' th' dockymment, anyhow."

"Well, let's see. Here on th' outside it says this:

"WRITTEN IN TOTAL DARKNESS!"

"Will whoever may find this take or send it to Miss Estell Wayene, No. — East Forty-sixth street, New York? Pray do so, and oblige—"

"AN IMPRISONED MAN."

"TELL MISS W. WHERE FOUND!"

"That's all o' that side."

"Well, what d'ye think?" Chick questioned.

"What do I think?" Sam repeated. "Why, little feller, I think we're on th' right road, an' if we keep on we'll 'git thar'!"

"So do I. Go on, though, an' let's hear what t'other side says."

"All right. Don't s'pose we've got any right ter read that side, but I guess detectives don't stop at trifles o' this kind, so here goes!" And turning the sheet of paper, Sam read:

"WRITTEN IN THE DARK!"

"MY DEAR ESTELL:—"

"I am imprisoned, and being treated shamefully. My mouth is gagged, and my elbows are tied at my sides. I cannot understand it. Telegraph for Charles at once, and when he comes, tell him to employ detectives and find me. I cannot tell where I am—whether in Brooklyn, Harlem, Jersey, or where. I am near a busy railroad. Question whoever brings this to you."

"WILLIAM MORSEBY."

Such was the note, terribly written, but plainly readable.

"That looks crooked—I mean it looks like somethin' crooked was goin' on, anyhow!" Chick averred.

"Great toments, yes!" cried Sam, as he folded the paper and thrust it back into his pocket. "If there ain't somethin' rotten here, Chick, there never was nothin' rotten in Denmark, that's sure. I begin ter git a peep o' daylight through th' bung-hole o' this mystery now, an' if we don't make it lively fer that Jim Gallons, an' fer Henry Morseby, too, I'll eat my boots—holes, heels, an' all! D'ye begin ter ketch on ter th' thread o' th' play?"

"Well, yes; I begin ter see how it is, but don't s'pose I could explain it like you kin."

"I kin explain it, fur ez we've got, an' don't ye fergit it!"

"Go ahead, then, an' let's hear how ye think it is."

"Well, ter begin with, that Jim Gallons is a big rascal."

"Sure!"

"An' so likewise is that Henry Morseby."

"Kerrect!"

"An' there's a big game at stake. It may be insurance; it may be somethin' else. We ain't

got down ter that p'int yet. Now, this here rascal of a Hennyery, he's telegrafted ter his brother in St. Louis that his daddy's dead. 'Tain't th' old man 'tall! It's that servant, Jones, what's dead! Th' old man Morseby is shet up out here in Bill Joshkins's house. We know that, fer a fact; an' here's th' proof!" And Sam slapped the pocket where the paper was hidden.

"Straight as a string, so fur!" cried Chick. "Go on!"

"Furdermore," Sam continued, "that 'ere telegraft said th' old man died o' a contagious fever. What was that fer? Why so's they could plant old Jonesy 'thout any one's seein' th' corpus! I tell ye, Chick, there's game there, game as big's a elephant!"

"That's jest what's th' matter, Sammy, an' it's fer us ter block th' game. We know what's goin' on, Sam, an' now we must jest set about lettin' somebody else know. Ef we ain't jest doin' prime work fer our first job, then I don't know nothin' 'bout th' case!"

"Now ye'r jest a-war' lin' sense, little feller; real old-style hoss sense. This here Miss Wayene is our main-brace an' back-stay, an' we must go an' intervoo her. Then when Charles Augustus gits home we'll put him onto th' racket, an' wind th' jig up in double-soon time! How's them fer high? We'll git our name up, you bet! We'll open a detective agency, an' go inter business on a big scale. You said ye wanted ter be a detective, little pardner, an' here ye be, right on ther high-road ter fame. I tell ye, Chick, we're a hull team, we are, an' we're as full o' sand as all Jersey. Wonder how old Greenerton—I mean Pinkerton—would feel, ef he could see th' wreath o' laurel that's sort o' hoverin' over our brows! He'd go an' commit susanicide, sure. Ginger! What a p'izin old rattler that Hennyery Morsebee—or Morsebee—or whatever it is—must be, ter shet his old dad up like he has, an' then claim he's dead! Lordy! Ef I was a farmer, an' sich a feller kem a-nosin' 'round my hen-roost, I'd spot him on th' shoot, sure! Come, though, little pard; it won't do fer me ter set here all day an' listen ter your chin-music. You do jest beat all, for talkin'! We've got biz on hand, now, an' we must be up an' a-doin'. Come! We must git over ter New York soon as possible, if not sooner. Let's go right across there an' git aboard o' one o' them Delaware an' Lackawanna trains, an' be off."

"I'm with ye," said Chick, and getting up, they started for the point where they had noticed all the trains came to a stop before crossing the tracks of another road.

Only a short distance had they gone, however, when they were suddenly accosted by a boy, a lad about Sam's size and age, who exclaimed:

"Say! Don't you two fellers want some fun? I've got a ground-squirrel in a tight place down here by th' end o' th' old brewery, an' if you'll help me fer about two minutes, we'll git him out! Th' one what ketches him, keeps him!"

"We're with ye," cried Sam, all excitement.

"Lead th' way an' trot out yer game!"

Little he dreamed that he was walking into a trap.

CHAPTER XII.

IN A TIGHT PLACE.

THE strange boy led the youthful detectives across the tracks and down the steep embankment, and paused behind the old Marion Brewery.

The Marion Brewery is a large, ungainly-looking building, with forlorn and lost-looking wings and ends, and was at that time in a very bad state of unrepair, having been standing idle for several years.

Inside, it is—or was—one vast labyrinth of halls, passages, rooms, vaults, crooks and turns, stairs, steps, ups and downs, and windows here and there, large and small, and all "at sixes and sevens."

Reaching the rear ground entrance of this building, the boy paused.

"Now," he said, "here's th' place. Come inside th' old crib, now, an' I'll show ye where th' squirrel went to." And as he spoke he pushed open the door with his foot and entered.

Sam and Chick followed him, and found themselves in a queer-looking place indeed.

This room of the old brewery was nearly square, with doors here and there which led into other rooms and passages.

Overhead was a large round hole, perhaps twenty feet across, and through this, from the windows of the second floor, most of the light came.

To this room there was no floor save the ground itself, and that was torn and rutted

there, showing where the machinery for brewing had formerly been.

Here and there around were great heaps of plaster and broken bricks.

It was a wild, deserted and uncared-for place indeed.

"Well," said Sam, after glancing around, "trot out yer squirrel, young feller, an' let th' fun begin."

"Don't want him out till we're ready fer him, do ye?" the stranger boy queried.

"Well, ain't we ready?"

"No, not quite. He'd git away, sure. Ye see them two holes there, don't ye?" pointing to two rat-holes near the ground at one side of the room.

"Yes, we observe 'em."

"Well, one o' you fellers git down by one, an' th' other at t'other, an' hold yer hats ready fer ter grab him th' minute he runs out. I'll go outside an' poke a stick into another hole, an' start him. He's good for a dollar, ye know, if ye git him alive."

"All right, go ahead," said Sam, and he and Chick sat down by the holes, hat in hand, to wait and watch.

The boy went out then, but instead of being further interested in catching the squirrel, he ran away at the top of his speed.

A minute passed, and still Sam and Chick sat there, waiting and watching. Their eyes were fixed intently upon the holes they were guarding, and they made not a sound, knowing that silence, in such a case, is essential to success.

So engaged were they that they failed to notice a door open behind them, or the two men who stepped out into the room and silently and cautiously approached them.

Nor did they become aware of the presence of these two men until they were suddenly seized from behind and thrown to the ground.

Then they realized, too late, the trap they had fallen into.

Their captors were Bill Joshkins and Doctor James Gallons.

Gags were instantly forced into the boys' mouths, and their hands were quickly tied behind their backs.

They were certainly in a desperate situation. Little mercy would these villains show them.

"There, my lads," said Gallons; "so ends your earthly usefulness. The jig is up with you. You would poke your nose in where you had no business, and you must take the consequences. This will wind up your career."

Sandy Sam fairly itched to reply. He wanted to set his tongue running and give Mr. Gallons a good blowing up. For him to be forced to keep silent was something terrible.

"An'," said Joshkins, "this here is what ye git fer comin' ter my house an' tellin' lies, an' eatin' up a dollar's wuth o' honey on me, ye young baggabones. Plague take me if I ain't a notion ter give ye both a whalin', jest fer th' satisfaction o' it!"

Again Sam ached to respond.

"Yes," said Gallons, "this is the last of you. You thought you were mighty smart, no doubt, prying into affairs that did not concern you, but you will now be able to realize your mistake. Come, Joshkins, lead the way, and we'll dispose of them at once."

The boys were raised to their feet, and Joshkins, holding Little Chick tightly by the collar, led the way out of the room, closely followed by Gallons with Sam.

They passed through a small door, along a narrow passage for a short distance, up a flight of rickety stairs, across a big room, into another and longer passage and through it, down another flight of stairs, and then across a large cellar-like room to a trap-door at one side.

This trap-door Joshkins raised, and then lighted a bit of candle which he had brought with him, and another flight of steps was disclosed to view.

These led down into the vault which had been used for storing beer in, in the days when the brewery had flourished.

Down into this vault the young detectives were taken.

"Is this the place?" Gallons asked of Joshkins.

"Yes," the latter answered, "this is th' place."

"No means of escape?"

"None except th' steps that go up to th' trap-door, sir, an' as they are loose we kin pull 'em up after us an' then fasten th' door down. This vault is under th' ground, an' there ain't a hole in it big enough for a mouse to escape through."

"Good! This will answer then."

"They'll never git out, sir, ye kin depend on it."

"Do you hear?" Gallons asked, turning toward Sam and Chick. "Do you hear? You are to be left here to starve, and then become food for rats. How do you like it? The world will no doubt mourn your loss, and at some future day, when your skeletons are found, there will be a great sensation in the newspapers. That, however, has nothing to do with the present. When we leave you, and close that trap-door over you, you will be in your tomb—a tomb from which there is no possible chance for escape, and in which you are to die of starvation and thirst!"

"Thank goodness we've got a good full stum-mick ter begin on, anyhow!" Sam thought, and would have said, had he been free to use his nimble tongue.

As for Little Chick, he bore up manfully in the face of their great danger. He glanced at Sam, and seeing how cool he was, he had hope.

"We're goin' ter leave ye jest as ye be, too," said Joshkins. "There's no hope for ye—not a bit; so ye might as well git right down an' say yer 'Now I lay me'."

"Come, let's be going," said Gallons. "Our work here is about done."

"All right," Joshkins responded, and he led the way.

On reaching the top of the steps, the two villains turned and pulled them up through the hole. Then they shut the trap-door, and the two boys were left in total darkness.

They heard the men fasten the door, and then heard their footsteps as they left the room above. They listened to them as long as they could be heard, but at last they died away in the distance, and then all became assilent as the grave.

Sandy Sam was the first to act.

He felt around until he found his little partner, and then placing his back against his, he tried to unfasten the cords that bound his wrists.

But, he failed.

For a long time he worked faithfully at them, but they refused to yield.

At last, tired out, he gave up the task and sat down.

Then it was Chick's turn.

He got himself into position, and tried to release Sam.

He stuck to it well, and did his best, but he, too, failed.

They found that Joshkins understood well the art of tying hard knots.

Failing to free Sam's hands, however, Chick immediately tackled the gag.

He went carefully at work, and soon had the satisfaction of feeling the knot give way a little. This one, having been tied by Gallons, was a little less secure than the others.

Another careful effort on Chick's part, and Sam's tongue was set at liberty.

"Great jumpin' circus-hoss!" Sam instantly cried. "A purty pair o' gosh-blamed lunk-heads we are! Th' idee o' two professional detectives bein' taken in an' done fer like this! Blame me, if I ain't half a mind ter bump my head ag'in' th' wall here till I knock my brains out—if I've got any to knock out—but I begin ter think I ain't got any. We'd orter be shut up, Chick, an' stay shut up, too. We ain't fit ter be at large. We're liable ter feller off any lame dog's track, an' git lost. Serve us good an' right! Gosh han' ed soft-pated lunk-heads that we be! This shows that we ain't detectives yet, not by a long sight. We've learnt a lesson, though, an' I'll bet if we git out o' this scrape we won't git into another th' same way. Serves us jest right! If we'd tended ter our own business, an' not follered off that feller that told us th' lie 'bout th' squirrel, we wouldn't been here. Oh! jest let me ever git holt o' that young feller, an' I'll make him sing a happy tune, now you bet! I'll show him how ter lay for squirrels, an' don't ye fergit it! If I don't put a tin ear onto his mug, my name ain't Sam! An' as fer them other coons—Bushels an' By-gosh-kins—or whatever their names is, if I don't wind up their little balls o' yarn fer 'em, ye kin jest kick me all around th' hull city free o' charge! I tell ye, Chick, we must git out o' here, if we bu'st th' bucklers on our suspenders! We've got some red-hot work ter do! We're th' only livin' critters what's got onto this racket, an' th' safety an' future peace an' happiness o' old man Morseby 'pends 'tirely 'pon us! If we kick th' bucket, then he'll go up th' golden stairs, sure. Sides, I can't die happy now till I meet that feller that told me th' squirrel story. Oh, my! Jest let me twine my fingers inter his locks once, an' I'll bet they'll hear him yell clear from Hoboken ter Bergen P'int!"

Sam paused to catch his breath.

Having let off a little of his pent-up superfluous steam, he felt better.

"Well, little pardner," he presently demanded, "ain't ye got nothin' ter say? Anybody'd think ye— Hang it all, though, you're gagged! Bein' able ter wag my own jaws, I fergot all 'bout your bein' in a fix! I'll have ter see what I kin do for ye," and he tackled the knot which held Chick's gag in place.

That, however, was another of Joshkins's, and refused to yield.

"Gosh ter bumblebee!" cried Sam. "What's ter be did, Chick? I'll tell ye, though. I've got a knife in th' right thumb-hand-side pocket o' my breeches, little feller, an' if you kin possibly manage ter twist yerself inside-out enough ter git one hand in there an' git it out, we'll be all stunk! Jest try it, pardner, an' see what ye kin do."

Chick did try, and after a great deal of twisting and turning, he managed to get the knife out.

"Did ye git it?" Sam asked.

Chick's reply was to put the knife into his hand.

"Ah! Now we're O. K.!" cried Sam. "Now we'll git out o' here, pardner, er die a-tryin'! Jest hold on fer about ten frakshuns o' a second, till I git this toad-sticker open, an' I'll set ye free. There! I've got it! Now, jest you hold yerself right still so's I won't cut ye, an' I'll see what virtue there is in this sort o' ankedoke fer hard knots."

Chick stood perfectly still, and Sam, with the greatest care, proceeded to cut his bonds.

In a few moments Chick's hands were freed.

"There, little pardner," cried Sam, "now you do th' same fer me, an' then I'll git that ere mouth-stopper off so ye kin wabble yer fly-trap an' shed a few rays o' wisdom onto th' darkness o' this dreadful dilemma. You're th' brains o' th' conbernation, yer know."

Chick took the knife, and Sam was soon at liberty. Then Sam took it again, and in a moment more Chick could use his tongue at will.

CHAPTER XIII.

SANDY SAM'S GRIT.

"WELL," Chick exclaimed, as soon as he could speak, "that's a little better, anyhow!"

"Bout what I thought, too," Sam declared.

"Well, we are in a purty pickle this time, fer sure!"

"I should say so! Got any matches 'bout yer old clothes?"

"Guess so." And Chick began to explore his various pockets. "Yes, here's some."

"Bully! Jest light one, an' we'll take a look 'round th' place an' see how it looms up. We'll see what th' chances is fer 'scape."

Chick lighted one of his matches, and they both looked around the damp, noisome vault.

"Hello, b'gosh!" Sam suddenly cried out. "Here's one gold-mine, pard, a ready!"

"What is it?" Chick quickly asked.

"Why, a lantern; don't ye see it?" And Sam advanced to where one was hanging by a wire from a beam overhead.

"That's what 'tis, sure enough!"

A lantern it proved to be, but it was one mass of cobwebs and dust.

Sam took it down and gave it a hasty brushing, and then shook it to see whether it contained any oil.

"Any grease in it?" Chick asked.

"Yes, it's 'most full."

"Bully fer us!" And Chick lighted another match. "Here, set it goin'."

The lantern was soon burning brightly, and then the boys felt more cheerful.

"Now," said Sam, "we kin see what we're doin'. Come on, little feller, an' let's look 'round an' see how th' land lays."

Lantern in hand, then they began to explore the vault.

"Here's an old shovel, anyhow!" Chick presently cried out. And he picked it up as he spoke.

"Fetch it along," said Sam. "It may be useful. I'd sooner you'd find a hole that leads out o' here, though."

"So would I, you bet! I've found th' next thing to one, though."

"How's that?"

"Why, ain't I found th' shovel ter make one with?"

"Say, Chick, that would be jest th' boss racket, if we could only make it work. I'm 'fraid we'd find it rather hard work ter shovel a hole inter this stone wall, though."

"Yes, I guess it would be rather a tough job, Sam, fer sure. Can't we find a place where th' stones is loose so we kin pull 'em out?"

"Don't b'leve we kin. It won't do no harm ter look 'round, though. We've got ter git out somehow, that's flat."

"You're right! An' we can't do it by stand-in' here a-chinnin'; so, come on."

The two lads advanced, keeping close to the wall and examining its face as they went along, but not a break could they find in it.

Presently, however, near one corner, they discovered quite a large heap of fresh earth.

"Hello! what's this?" cried Chick.

"Looks like rats' work," Sam answered. And he flashed his light around to discover where the earth came from.

He soon found a small hole, and bade Chick thrust the handle of his shovel into it.

Chick obeyed, and found that he could reach back for two feet or more.

"Jest th' place we want!" he cried. "Look out now, Sam, an' I'll see if I can't pry out a stone."

Sam stepped back, and Chick braced himself and gave a strong pull.

To the great surprise of both, out came half a dozen or more of the largest stones, and Chick tumbled over upon his back with more suddenness than grace in his movements.

"Bully fer our side!" cried Sam, joyously. "I'd like ter see old Quarts an' B'gosh keep us shet up! It can't be *did*, Chick, if th' court-house knows herself, an' she thinks she *do*! Didn't hurt yerself, did ye?"

"No," responded Chick, as he sprung to his feet. "I'm all sound. It strikes me that we'd better be a little more quiet, though, fer we don't know who may hear us."

"An' it strikes me that you're about right," Sam agreed. "We must be as still as death. Now, let's go fer thet 'ere hole, an' dig our way ter light an' liberty."

"I'm with ye. Who digs first?"

"Well, I'll take th' first turn at it. You hold th' lantern so's I kin see."

"All right."

Sam took the shovel and crept into the hole, and was soon at work.

And he soon found that it was anything but easy work. The ground was hard, the shovel was dull, and he was so cramped for room that he could make but little headway.

When he had loosened enough earth almost to close up the hole in the wall, he had to stop and crawl out, and then clear it away to make room for more.

Then Chick took a turn. He was so small, though, that he could make but slow progress, so the greatest share of the work fell to Sam.

Sam worked like a beaver. For almost an hour he took but little or no rest, and at the end of that time he had only succeeded in enlarging the hole sufficiently to enable him to work more freely.

It was a discouraging task.

How far they were below the surface, the boys could not tell. All they could do was to dig up and up till they could see daylight.

After about an hour's work, Sam sat down to rest.

"Ginger!" he exclaimed, "but that's hard work!"

"D'ye think we kin ever git out that way?" Chick asked.

"Do I think so, Chick? Well, if we can't, little feller, it won't be *my* fault. I think I've got th' sand in me fer this job, pardner, an' I'll stick to it if I have to dig till this time ter-morrer."

"Bully fer you! If you ain't a solid boy, Sam, I don't know who is!"

"An' I've got some solid work ahead o' me, too."

"I guess ye have. Wish I had a shovel, too, so's I could help ye. I might clear th' dirt away, even if I can't do much good at diggin'."

"That's so. Let's look 'round once more, an' may be we kin find somethin'."

Taking up the lantern they made another tour of the vault, and this time found an old scoop.

"Jest th' thing!" cried Chick. "Now we'll go fer it in dead earnest!"

And go for it in earnest they did. They worked as they had never worked before.

Higher and higher the cavity reached, until at last, after what seemed to the boys almost half a day, Sam could no longer touch the top with his shovel.

And still there were no signs of daylight above.

"Well, Chick," Sam said, as he wiped the perspiration from his face, "I've got jest as fur as I kin go. If we can't find somethin' longer than this shovel ter poke th' dirt loose with I'm 'fraid we're stuck."

"Lordy! I hope not, Sam! Lets take another look around."

They did so, but nothing could they find.

They began to despair. To be foiled at last, after working so hard and so long, was indeed discouraging.

They sat down to rest and give the question a little thought.

Barely had they seated themselves though, when a strange rumbling sound was heard, instantly followed by a loud thud. And so close at hand did it seem to be, that both boys were startled.

They sprung instantly to their feet, and then Sam cried out:

"B'gosh, Chick, th' hole's caved in! Lucky I wasn't in there, eh? Now, little feller, grasp yer scoop an' let's ter work!"

It was so. The unsupported top soil had fallen in.

The lads now set to work with a will, but they made—or seemed to make—but little headway.

As fast as they could dig the loose earth out of the hole in the wall, just so fast more kept falling in its place.

The hours passed, and still the end was not reached. The boys were almost tired out, and were as hungry as the proverbial bear. All around them the earth was banked up as high as their heads, and considerably higher than Chick's. Expecting the end every moment, they had taken but little care to keep it shoveled well back out of their way. Their lantern had long since burned itself out, and they felt almost completely discouraged.

At last, however, they found that they were beginning to gain. No more earth fell, and the hole was soon cleared.

Still no light was seen. Could it be that there was still more earth to fall?

Sam waited for some time, afraid that such was the case, but at last he ventured to crawl part way into the hole and look up.

What he saw surprised him not a little, and hastily drawing back he said to Chick:

"Chick, I'm gosh-hanged sure if it ain't night an' th' stars is a-shinin'!"

"Git out!"

"Fact, fer sure. An' 'git out' is jest what I intend ter do. Come along, little pard. We've earned our freedom, if any poor fellers ever did!"

Chick was greatly surprised to find that it was night, but he did not hesitate any about leaving the vault. He was only too glad to be able to do so.

He crawled through into the hole, and then, after a great many trials and failures, he and Sam climbed out to the ground above.

It was quite dark.

"There!" exclaimed Sam, drawing a long, deep breath of relief, "we're out. Now, what next?"

"Well, Sam," Chick responded, "if ye leave it ter me, I'd say th' next move should be ter find somethin' ter eat and a place ter sleep!"

"Sensible Chick!" Sam cried. "That's what we'll do. First o' all, though, we'd better make ourselves scarce in this neighborhood, hadn't we?"

"Well, yes, by all means; we don't want ter fall inter th' hands o' th' Fillerstines ag'in."

"Not much we don't! An' it hits me, Chick, that this Delaware railroad is about th' quickest way out. What d'ye think? We kin go ter Hoboken, an' there take a street car for Jersey City."

"That'll do, first rate. An' here comes a train!"

"Sure 'nough! Come on!" And Sam led the way.

In making their escape from the old brewery, the boys had come out on the side nearest the railroad, and it was but natural that that means of getting away should suggest itself first.

As Chick said, a train was just then coming, and when it came to a stop, as all trains do at that point, the boys got aboard and sat down upon the steps.

When they arrived in Hoboken they took one of the bob-tail cars for Jersey City, and in due time were at the ferry.

Here they found that it was about eight o'clock.

Sam led his partner at once into the waiting-room of the Pennsylvania railroad station, and Chick could but wonder what he meant to do there.

He soon found out.

Advancing boldly to the ticket window, Sam asked:

"Say, mister, s'pose a feller left St. Louis late last night, 'bout what time will he get here? A gentleman wants ter know."

"Well," the agent replied, "he can reach here about eleven o'clock to-morrow forenoon."

"Thank ye, sir," said Sam, and he and Chick went out again.

"Well, what next?" Chick asked.

"Supper!" Sam responded, promptly. "Business 'fore pleasure, ye know."

"Certainly! Lead on, pard, fer I'm ready fer biz o' that kind, you bet!"

Sam led the way to a restaurant where he was well known, and in half an hour he and his little partner had filled themselves almost to bursting.

Then they went to the Sanders domicile on Railroad avenue.

Arriving there, they found that peace and quiet reigned supreme. Sanders was seated in one corner, calmly smoking his pipe, while his wife was mending some clothes near the table. Neither spoke to the other.

Sam gave a hurried, though not very accurate explanation of his absence all day, and then he and Chick hurried off to bed.

"Now, pardner," Sam whispered, "jest do yer tallest kind o' sleepin', an' prepare fer ter-morrer."

A minute later both were asleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

A SLIGHT BLUNDER.

BRIGHT and early next morning "Sandy" Sam and "Little Chick" were up and doing.

Sam took a bath, and put on his best clothes, and was altogether a different lad, in looks, as compared with his every-day self.

Chick took a bath, too, and brushed his clothes up until they looked quite respectable.

"Sam v're you vas goin', maybe, eh?" Sam's father asked. "You ton't tress oop like dot fer not'ings, ain't it?"

"Sure, an' it's meself that would loike ter know that same!" cried Mrs. Sanders.

"Oh! I'm jest goin' over ter New York with my little pardner, here," Sam explained.

"Don't you worry 'bout me! I'll turn up, like a bad cent. Ye'll soon see me back ag'in, right side up with care, an' charges paid."

Leaving the house, the two lads hastened to the ferry and crossed to New York.

Once there, they took the Elevated railroad for up-town, and soon arrived in the neighborhood of Forty-sixth street.

When they reached that street, Sam said:

"Now, pardner, we're here; an' th' next thing's ter find th' right house an' ax fer Miss Wayne."

"Kerreck!"

"Well, come along!"

Down the street they started, and soon found the number they were looking for.

Up the steps they sprung, and Sam pulled the bell.

A trim-looking Irish girl soon came to the door.

"Well?" she interrogated, rather snappishly.

"Well," Sam repeated after her, "does Miss Estell Wayne hang out here?"

"Sir!"

Sam saw that he would have to use less street talk.

"What I mean ter say is, does she *live* here?"

"Yes, Miss Wayne resides here."

"Oh! That's it, eh? 'Resides.' Excuse me. We ain't got hold o' that word over in Jersey yet. Well, bein' as she resides here, is she ter home?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't see why ye need be so short about it, anyhow. Jest tell th' lady that two gentlemen desire ter see her on 'portant business."

"Will you send up your cards?" th' girl asked, sneeringly.

"Well, no," Sam replied. "Fact is, miss, I left my card-case at home on th' pianner."

"What names shall I mention, then?"

Sam began to grow impatient.

"You needn't mention no names at all!" he cried. "Th' lady wouldn't know us, anyhow. Jest trot yerself in there an' say jest what I told ye to. It beats me why folks can't come to the'r own front doors, so's a feller kin git a shot at 'em—"

"Oh!" the girl cried. "Do you mean to shoot any one here?"

"Course not!" Sam exclaimed. "Do we look like blood-thirsty 'sassins? Come, you go tell Miss Wayne what I said, an' have no more palaver 'bout it!"

"Well, I will tell her," said the girl, "but I am sure she will not consent to see you."

"Don't be too sure 'bout it, miss, for ye might git left."

The girl closed and locked the door, and the boys awaited her return.

Presently, back she came, and her answer was short and to the point:

"Miss Wayne declines to see you. You can state your business to me, or go away."

A boy with a little less "sand" than Sandy Sam would probably have given up; but not so Sam.

"She won't see us, eh?" he queried. "That's 'cause you've been puttin' your say-so in, I s'pose. No doubt you guv us a *fine* recommend. As fer tellin' you our business—we don't deal second-hand at this shop. I'll bet she *will* see us, an' don't you fergit it! You jest take her this, an' tell her we are waitin'."

And he handed the girl the paper he had found on the previous day.

She took it, and closed and locked the door as before; but this time Sam did not hear her start away at once.

"Come!" he called out. "Never mind tryin' ter read that yerself!"

The girl's footsteps were heard upon the marble floor at once. The shot had evidently struck home.

In a few minutes the door was flung open, and there stood the most beautiful woman the boys had ever seen, or at least they thought her to be, while behind her stood the Irish girl.

"Why, Kate," the lady cried, turning toward the servant, "you said they were horrid little *offians*! I fail to see it."

Sam and Chick grinned from ear to ear, and, while the lady was not looking at them, slyly made a grimace at the Irish girl, who turned very red.

"Come in," the lady said, as she turned again to the boys, "I want to question you."

Both pulled off their hats and entered the hall, and Sam gave a sly wink and a shrug of his shoulders for the benefit of the discomfited servant.

"Pass right up-stairs," the lady continued, and I will conduct you to my sitting-room. "And, Kate, when I call you, you will show the young gentlemen out."

Sam and Chick went up-stairs, the lady following them, and when they reached the top she passed them and conducted them into a handsomely-furnished room.

"Please be seated," she said, "and tell me quickly where you found this paper."

The boys sat down, and Sam answered the question. Then, at the lady's request, he told his story from the beginning, just as it is known to the reader.

"Oh! this is horrible—horrible!" the lady cried. "And you say that Henry Morseby has sent for Charles?"

"Well, not jest sent fer him, but he told him his father was dead, an'—"

"It is all the same—he will come at once. Oh! I wonder when he will reach here?"

"He will git to Jersey City erbout 'leven o'clock, ma'am," Sam answered. "I asked 'all 'bout that last night."

"Oh! I am glad he will be here so soon. I will go at once and engage a detective, and meet him at the train!"

"Skuse me, ma'am," said Sam, "but I can't see what ye want a detective fer now, bein' as th' detective work is all done. Me an' my pard here has done all o' that. We've lifted th' trail an' run th' game to earth, an' all there is ter do now is ter go an' bag it. All ye want is a policeman an' yours truly. I'll show ye where th' old man is shet up, an' th' copper kin git him out."

"You are right," the lady admitted. "It shall be as you suggest. Will you meet me at the Jersey City station at eleven?"

"We will, ma'am, or bu'st a button a-tryin'!"

"Very well. Be in the waiting-room, and do not fail."

"Oh! we'll be there, sure!"

"You have shown remarkably good sense in this matter, and the best of cool judgment—"

"Don't, ma'am, don't!" Sam implored. "It wasn't me. My pardner here, Mr. Chick, he does all th' brain-work; I simply go along ter do th' fightin'."

Chick protested, but the lady interrupted him:

"I meant both of you," she said. "You are remarkably shrewd boys, and deserve praise. To show you that I mean what I say, I will ask your advice. Shall I notify the police? or wait till I see Mr. Morseby, and put it all into his hands?"

"Well," said Sam, "I think I would wait. I think that would be th' best. Maybe them police fellers would go at it with a big rush, an' sp'ile it all. Th' villains might git wind that we're after 'em, an' give us th' slip. I think it best ter say

nothin' till ye see Mr. Charles, an' then tell him the hull story. Them's *my* idees."

"And I think you are right. I will wait."

"There's one p'int, ma'am, that I can't jest git inter my thick head, an' if you can give me a lift over that knotty place, I'd like ter ax ye fer a p'inter."

"Ask me anything you wish to," was the gracious reply, "and I will enlighten you, if I can."

"Well, ma'am, it's this: If Jones, th' old servant, has been planted as Mr. Morseby, how will they account fer Jones? That's th' p'int that's been a-gettin' th' best o' me all along."

"I can explain that, now that I understand the vile scheme. Henry Morseby—base villain and hypocrite that he is! was here yesterday afternoon, and he told me Jones was dead. Jones had been ill for a long time, and partly deranged, and of late he had been getting worse. Henry Morseby has frequently spoken of sending him away to an asylum, and yesterday he told me he had sent him the evening before. The wretch! It was his own father he sent away, while Jones was lying dead in the house!"

"An' he told ye Jones was dead?"

"Yes. He showed me a letter he had just received, which said that the poor man was dead—had died at an early hour that mornin'."

"An' I s'pose he had ter be buried on th' double-quick, too, so's no one could git a chance ter see him."

"Yes, you guess aright. The doctor—the letter purported to be from a doctor—said he had died of the same fever Mr. Morseby had had, and that it was necessary to inter the body at once. When Henry was here he told me it had been buried."

"Oh! th' villain!" cried Sam. "It would jest do me good ter see him hanged! I wonder what he's tryin' ter do, anyhow?"

"Well, I have my suspicions," said Miss Wayne, "but I do not care to mention them just at present. You will learn it all in good time."

"Yes, I s'pose so. Well, ma'am, if that is all, I guess me an' my pard had better slope."

"Had better do what?"

"Slope—I mean we had better be goin'."

"Oh! Excuse me. I failed to catch your meaning. You do use some very strange words indeed. Yes, you may go. And, do not fail to meet me at the station."

"We'll be there, sure," Sam declared, as he and Chick rose to go. "Good-mornin', ma'am!"

"Good-morning!"

The lady followed them to the door of her room, and called the Irish girl to slow them out. "Good-by, Kittie, darlint," said Sam, as the girl opened the door. "Next time we call here, maybe you won't be so mighty fly. I'd like ter steal a kiss, ye look so red an' rosy; but as I've got a girl over in Jersey, of course it wouldn't do. Ta-ta!" And he sprang out, just in time to escape a severe slap in the face.

"Lordy, Sam!" cried Chick. "You've got more cheek than a plumber!"

"That's sand, Chick, sand. I'm full of it, too."

"I should say ye was!"

All of a sudden Sam stopped short, right in the street, and exclaimed:

"Well, by th' great hokeyty-pokety! If we ain't a fine brace o' detectives, then I don't know! We'd best sell out, as soon as possible."

"Why, what's th' matter now?" Chick asked.

"What's th' matter! Why, jest this: We've made th' worst kind o' blunder!"

"How—where?"

"Well, s'pose they find we've 'scaped from that old brewery!"

"S'pose they do."

"Yes, s'pose they do. Don't ye s'pose they'll hustle that old man off to a new hidin'-place, sooner than quick? One o' us had orter watched that house all night!"

Chick's face became thoughtful at once.

"What's to be done?" he asked.

"Come along, an' I'll tell ye as we go. An' you jest pay close 'tention ter what I say. I'm goin' out there, jest as quick as I kin git there; an' if th' mischief ain't already done, we'll nip that little game right in the bud. I want you ter stay at th' station an' meet Miss Wayne, an' tell her where I be. Then when Charles Augustus comes, an' she tells him th' story, you tell him I say ter come out at once with th' police, an' you show 'em th' way. If he don't come, then I want Miss Wayne ter go ter police headquarters an' tell her story, an' come an' rescue th' old man anyhow. See? When ye git out there, a big 'X' on th' gate-post will mean 'all

right,' an' a big 'O' will mean 'gone.' If th' big 'O' is there, Miss Wayne is ter go straight home, an' you go straight ter *my* house; an' both of ye stay right there till ye git a telegraph from me. Is that all plain?"

"Yes," answered Chick, "plain as day."

CHAPTER XV.

THE BOYS WIN.

WHEN the young detectives got back to Jersey City they entered the Pennsylvania railroad station, and Sam bought a ticket for Marion, as the West End of Jersey City is called.

It was his quickest way of getting out there.

"Well, good-by, Chick," he said, "an' don't furgit th' programme. Have ye got it all straight?"

"Yes," Chick replied, "I've got it all right. An' you look out you don't fall inter th' hands o' th' Fillerstines out there!"

"Oh! I'll look out fer that! But there ain't much danger, Chick, fer old B'goshkins won't never know me in *this* disguise."

"What disguise?"

"Why, th' one I'm wearin'."

"I don't see any. What d'ye mean?"

"Don't ye see that I've got a clean face, an' also my good clothes on? That's th' best *sort* o' disguise fer me."

Chick laughed, and Sam hurried out to catch his train.

On arriving at Marion, he made haste to get around to the old house where Mr. Morseby was confined.

He soon came near it, and made his way around until he presently found himself in the thicket of bushes near the narrow lane across the street.

Barely had he concealed himself there, when he saw a boy coming down the lane. And he recognized him at once. It was the one who had led him and Chick into the trap on the previous day.

"Hello!" Sam thought. "Here's th' very feller I want ter see! Now, if I don't make him think there's a hereafter, my name ain't Sam! I'll jest give him a lesson in ketchin' squirrels!"

Sam waited until the boy came along, and then sprang out in front of him.

"Say!" he cried. "Don't you want some fun? I've got a squirrel up a gum-tree down in th' swamp, an' I want some help ter git him down. Come! You jest climb th' tree, an' I'll bet you'll git th' squirrel!"

At first, the boy did not know who Sam was; but the moment he said "squirrel," he recognized him. And then he started to run away.

But Sam was too quick for him. He sprang after him, caught him by the arm, and swung him around.

"No, ye don't!" he cried. "You've got ter give me satisfaction fer that 'ere scurvy trick ye played me yesterday! Come, now! Put up your dukes, an' fight!"

The boy struggled to get away, but finding that it was useless, he began to fight.

Sam worried him until he was fully enraged, and then the fun began. And in just about one minute Sam had scoured the lane with him pretty thoroughly.

"There!" he cried, as he let him go. "When ye've got any more o' them squirrels ter ketch, jest call 'round fer me!"

"I'll tell me fadder," the boy blubbered, as he walked away, "an' he'll fix you!"

A thought struck Sam at once. Now that he had made his presence known to this fellow, it would never do for him to allow him to go.

"Say!" he called out. "Jest hold on a bit! Who is yer daddy?"

"He's Bill Joshkins, *that's* who he is!" was the surly reply. "An' he'll fix you, too."

Sam saw that he *must* make a prisoner of the fellow now at any cost.

"Jest hold on a bit," he said. "I guess your daddy don't want ter see ye very bad, an' I'm awful lonesome here, so you'd better stay with me."

The boy started again to run away, but Sam soon grabbed him and held him fast.

On one side of the lane was a garden, and Sam espied a small coil of rope hanging on the fence, evidently left there by the gardener. Pulling his prisoner along with him, he soon procured the rope, and then wound it around and around the boy's body, not forgetting to slip a couple of turns into his mouth for a gag.

When he had done he led his prisoner out of sight into the bushes, and then bound his feet, too.

"Now," he said, "I guess you're all right. How d'ye like it? More fun ter ketch squirrels, ain't it? Now, I want ter ax you a question or two, an' I want straight answers. If ye don't

give 'em, I'll knock yer brains out with this stone!" And Sam picked up a large stone as he spoke. "Ye can't speak, I know," he added; "but ye kin shake yer head, an' that'll do fer me. Now, in th' first place, does yer daddy know we've got out o' th' old brewery?"

The boy shook his head "No."

"Good! Now, is that old man still shet up there in th' house?"

The boy nodded "Yes."

"Bully!" Sam exclaimed. "That's all, an' now ye kin roll over an' go ter sleep ter pass away th' time."

After a while, making sure that no one was around to see him, Sam crept across the street and made a large X on each post of Joshkins's gate with a piece of chalk. Then he returned, hid himself in the bushes, and waited.

Meanwhile, down in the station, Little Chick waited patiently for Miss Wayne to come.

A little before eleven she arrived, and Chick went up and spoke to her at once.

"Where is your companion?" she asked.

Chick explained, and told her all that Sam had said.

"He is a smart lad," she declared, after listening patiently. "We will follow his directions."

Miss Wayne made inquiries concerning the train, and found that it was about "on time," and then she and Chick went out into the trainshed to await its arrival.

At last it came, and a great stream of passengers came pouring out of it.

Miss Wayne watched them as they passed her, and presently surprised Chick by springing forward and throwing herself into the arms of a fine-looking young man.

There was an embrace and a kiss, which went far to prove that they were a little more than mere friends to each other.

Miss Wayne drew him aside, and then called his attention to Little Chick.

"This is Mr. Charles," she explained.

Then followed a long though hurried explanation, and it was painful to watch the expressions of the young man's face.

When Miss Wayne had concluded, he simply said "Come," and led the way out of the station.

Once outside, he made inquiries for the nearest livery-stable, and learning that there was one not far away, on Montgomery street, he set out at once to find it, Miss Wayne and Chick with him.

Arriving at the stable, he engaged a team and a large carriage, with a driver, and gave orders to be driven at once to police head-quarters.

There he told his story.

Four policemen were detailed to accompany him, and, having procured the necessary papers, they set out for West End.

As Little Chick did not know the names of the streets, he could direct the driver only by pointing out the way; but at last the carriage rolled into the right street, and Chick designated the house.

When the carriage stopped before it, the policemen sprung out at once. Two of them ran quickly around to guard the rear of the house, another stationed himself in front, while the fourth, with Mr. Morseby, advanced to the front door and knocked.

The marks upon the gate-posts told them plainly that their game was there.

The door was opened by Joshkins himself, and he was arrested and handcuffed ere he realized what it meant.

His wife soon shared the same fate.

And about that time Sandy Sam came across the street with his prisoner, having released his legs so that he could walk.

Leaving the three under guard, our friends began a search of the house, and were not long in finding the room in which Mr. Morseby was imprisoned.

The key was in the lock, and the door was instantly thrown open, disclosing a frightfully dark and noisome room.

The poor old man was taken out at once, and his first words were a fervent "Thank God!"

The prisoners were turned over to the policemen, three of whom took them away, the fourth remaining in charge of the house.

As soon as old Mr. Morseby was ready to go home, he was helped into the carriage, and, taking Sam and Chick with them, they set out for New York.

When they reached the metropolis they drove at once to the Morseby mansion.

The front door was found unlocked, and they entered without warning.

Then they advanced into the library of the mansion, old Mr. Morseby leading the way, and there, seated at the table, with a bottle of wine

and glasses between them, were Henry Morseby and James Gallons.

They glanced up as the door opened, expecting to see a servant enter, but when they beheld the old gentleman they both sprung to their feet in alarm.

And then the others entered, Sandy Sam and Little Chick by no means in the rear.

"My God! Father!" Henry Morseby gasped.

"Yes, your father," the old gentleman said, in trembling tones; "but you are not my son. Henceforth I have but one son, and his name is Charles!"

Before any one could guess his purpose, Henry Morseby drew a pistol, placed it to his head, and fired; falling to the floor a corpse.

Then all was excitement and confusion. And in the midst of it all, James Gallons attempted to sneak away. And he would have succeeded, but for Sandy Sam, who saw him just as he was gaining the door.

Springing in front of him, Sam snatched up a chair and cried:

"Stand back, you villain! or there'll be some more brains sent flyin' round here!"

With an angry oath the man turned to seek another avenue for escape, but Charles Morseby stood in his way, a cocked revolver aimed at his heart.

"Surrender, or die!" he said.

The rascal surrendered, and was handed over to the police at once.

Little more remains to be told, except to explain the motive which led Henry Morseby to carry out his scheme of crime.

William Morseby, the father, had recently fallen heir to a vast English estate. This estate was entailed, to descend to the oldest male heir, so long as no legal heir to whom it so descended made will to the contrary, which each had the power to do. Thus far, no such will had been made. After his father, Henry Morseby was the next in line, he being older than Charles. But it was almost certain that William Morseby would break the line of descent, since Charles was his favorite; and it was to prevent this that his villainous elder son put him out of the way and proclaimed him dead. He wanted the entire property for himself. And why? Because, once the possessor of such vast wealth, he hoped to win the hand of the beautiful and rich Estell Wayne, although he knew she was affianced to his brother Charles.

Our story is told, our task is done.

In due time, Charles Morseby and Miss Wayne were married, and are now living at the Morseby mansion, happy in each other's love, and in the love of their children.

And the grandfather is there, too, now a hale, hearty, happy old man, who says:

"So far as that English estate is concerned, I shall not break the line. Charles may go as he will when I am gone."

James Gallons, the rascally and villainous pseudo-doctor, is now sojourning at Sing Sing.

Bill Joshkins spent a short term in a like institution at Trenton, and when he came out he, with his "Sary" and their promising son, set out for parts unknown.

Denny Bunyon still follows the "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain," and recently spent a few months at Snake Hill.

"Sandy" Sam was handsomely rewarded, and he divided his reward with his little "pardon" share and share alike. He and Chick are sworn friends for life, and both are ever welcome at the Morseby mansion.

Out of his reward, Sam built a small house in a pleasant location at West End, where, we are happy to say, his father and mother live in peace and happiness unbroken.

"Little Chick" is still in New York, and whenever he speaks of his friend, Sam Sanders, he calls him "Sandy" Sam, that "Solid" Boy from the "Land o' Sand."

THE END.

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